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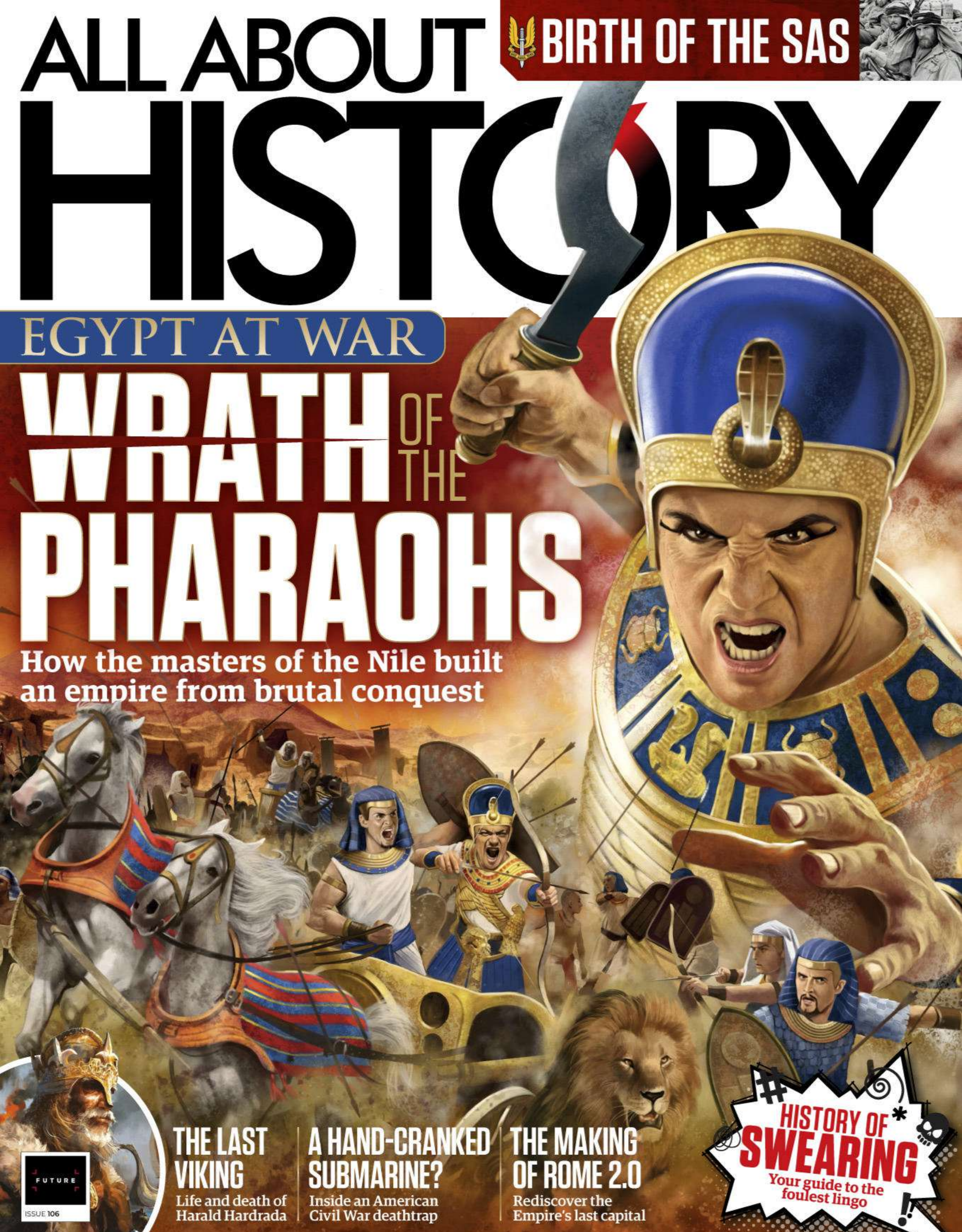
BIRTH OF THE SAS

EGYPT AT WAR

WRATH OF THE PHARAOHS

How the masters of the Nile built an empire from brutal conquest



FUTURE

ISSUE 106

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Life and death of Harald Hardrada

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SCAN TO JOIN OUR NEWSLETTER

Ramesses III depicted standing before Montu, the Egyptian god of war

Welcome

What comes to mind when you think of Ancient Egypt? For me, it's the pyramids (of course), its pantheon of gods, mummification, hieroglyphs and its giant monuments. Rather low down the list is its military, and realising that was part of what spurred our cover feature this issue. Compared to the Greeks and Romans, we really don't seem to reflect on the battlefield prowess of the Egyptians, their great conquests and victories, but it was such an important part of their success and expansion. So this issue I'm delighted to welcome Garry Shaw to help us dissect how important war was to the prestige of the pharaohs and why Egypt became a power to be feared.

Elsewhere we have Gavin Mortimer telling us the story of the founding of the SAS, Don Hollway on the life of the last Viking Harald Hardrada, Judith Herrin revealing the history of the ancient city of Ravenna, and Dr Howard Drake reflecting on the impact of Emperor Constantine converting to Christianity. It was also our great pleasure to chat with historian Helen Carr this issue, author of *The Red Prince: John of Gaunt* and host of the *Hidden Histories* podcast. Learn why she thinks podcasts are changing how we can access the past, why that's important for public engagement to historical debate and why she believes everyone secretly loves history.

Jonathan Gordon
Editor

ALL ABOUT HISTORY

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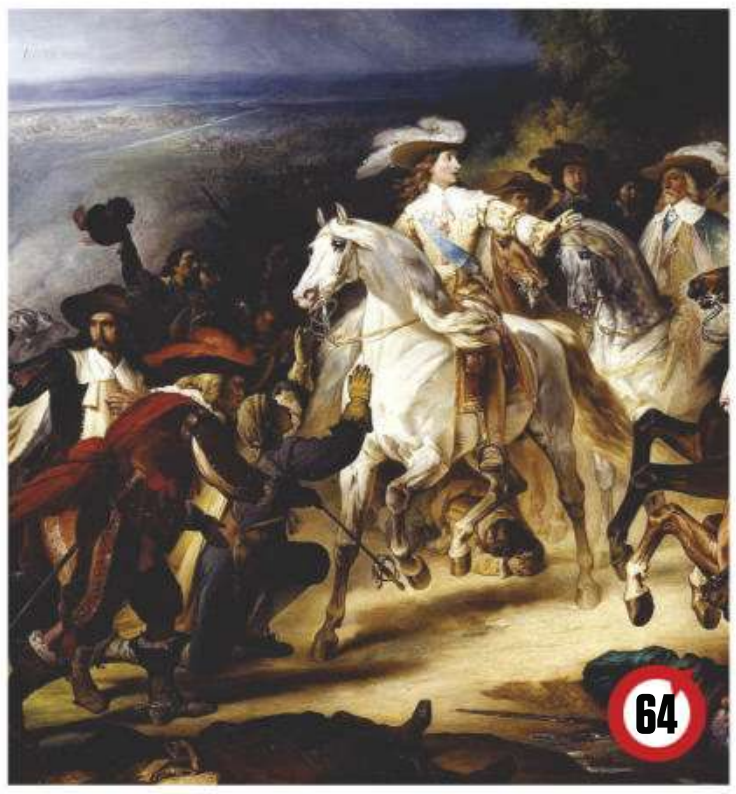

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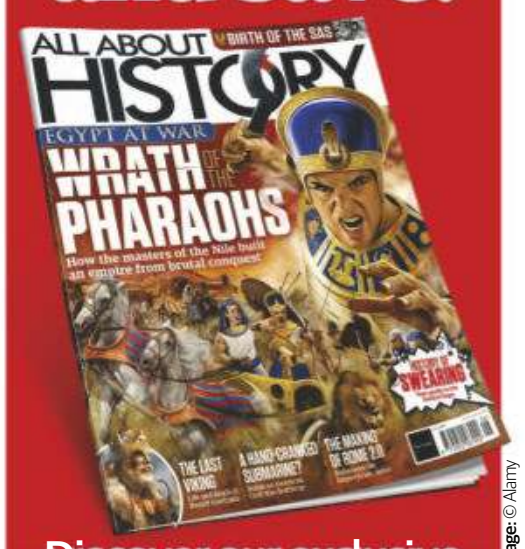
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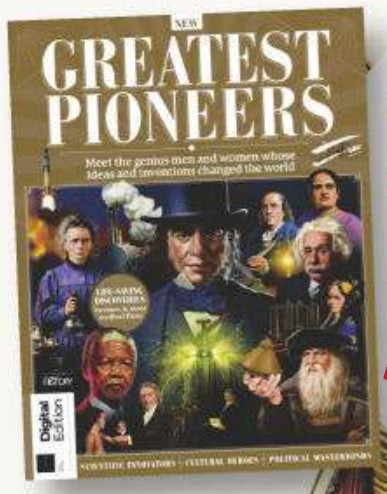
Main image: © Alamy



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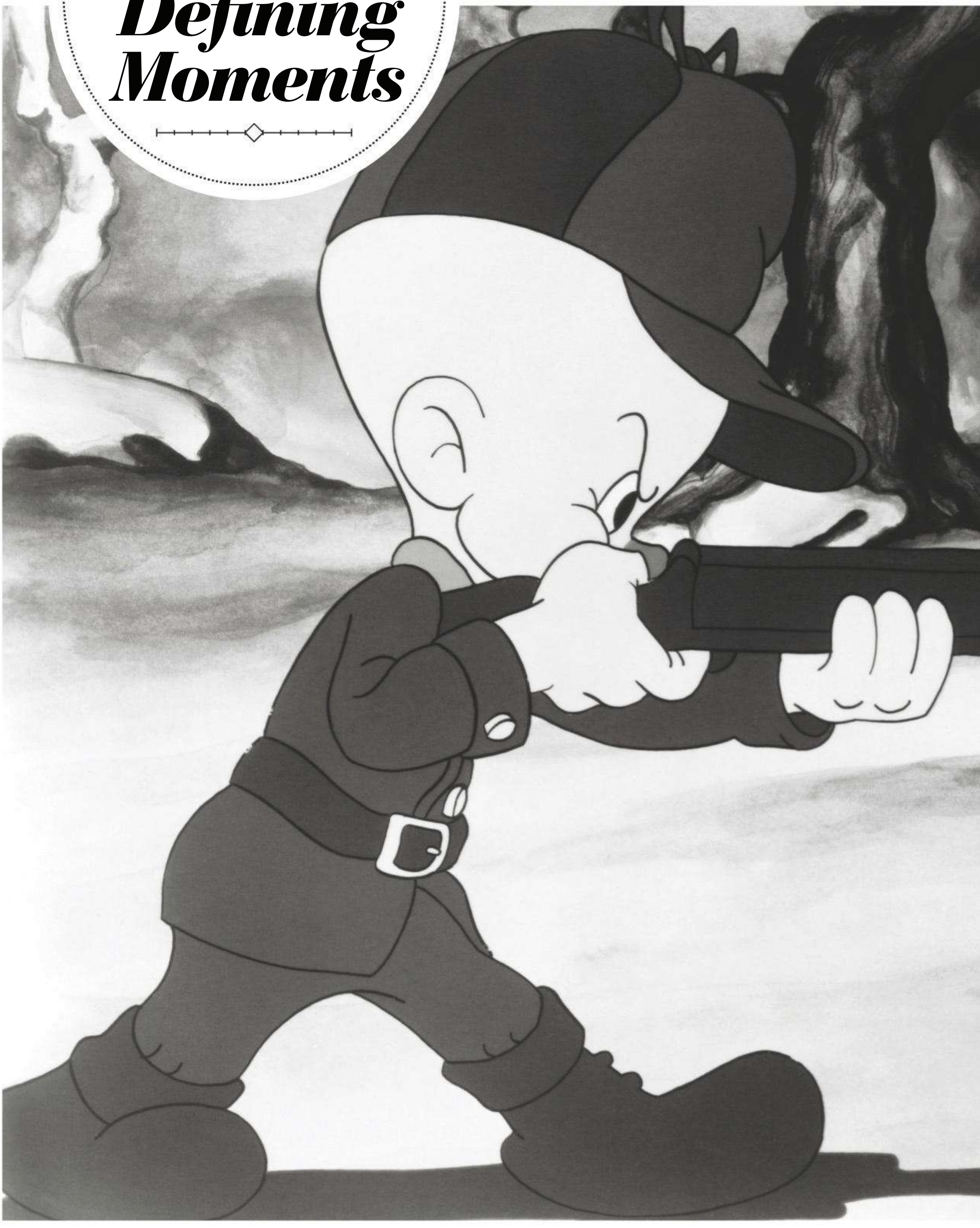
Defining Moments



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27 July 1940

BUGS BUNNY MAKES HIS DEBUT

Iconic Looney Tunes character Bugs Bunny appeared alongside Elmer Fudd in the animated short *A Wild Hare* and used his famous catchphrase "Eh… What's up, Doc?" for the first time. Although Bugs had already appeared in other films, *A Wild Hare* – which was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Short Subject (Cartoon) – is considered to be his official debut.

© Alamy

6 August 1926

GERTRUDE EDERLE SWIMS ACROSS THE ENGLISH CHANNEL

Gertrude Ederle, a 20-year-old American competitive swimmer, made history when she became the first woman to swim the English Channel, from Cap Gris-Nez in France to Dover, England. It was her second attempt and Ederle smashed the fastest men's world record by almost two hours, with a time of 14 hours and 31 minutes.

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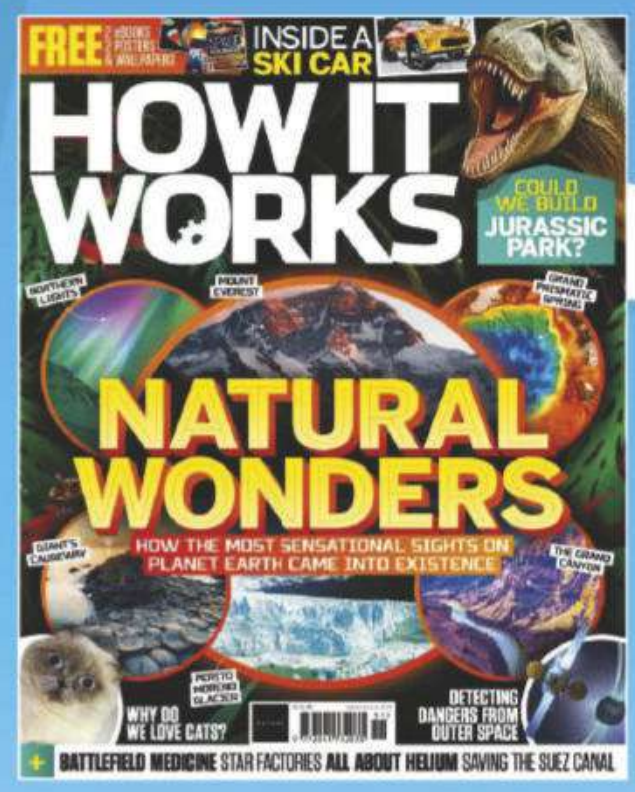
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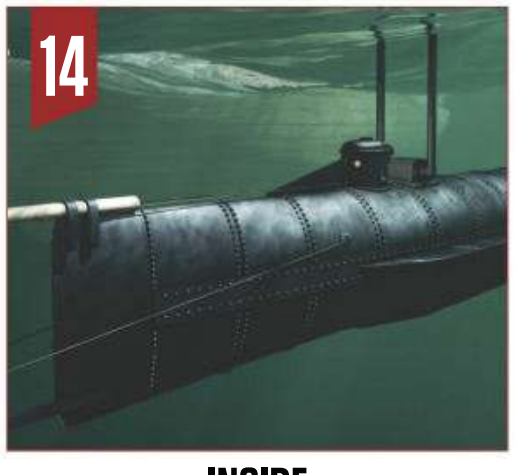
ALL ABOUT

THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

From secession to the assassination of President Lincoln, we chart the events, people and ideas that shaped this bloody conflict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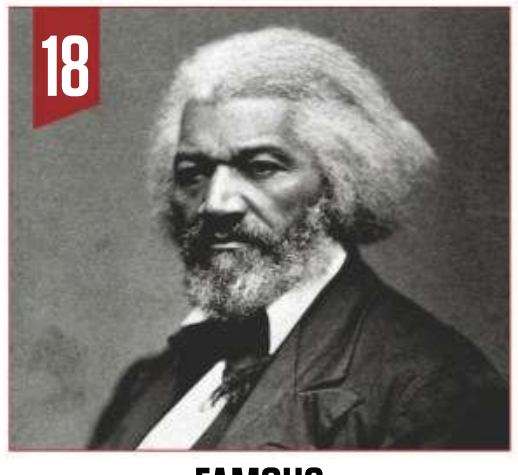
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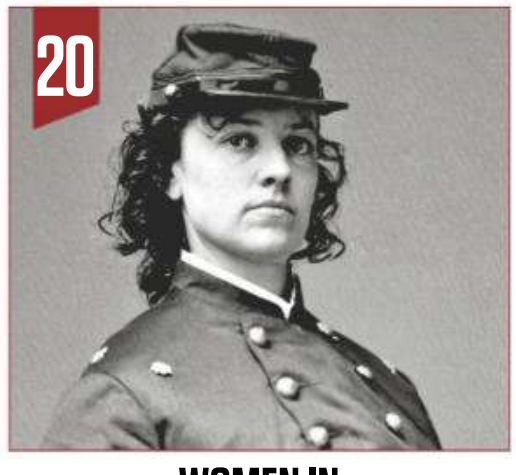
FAMOUS ABOLITIONISTS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WOMEN IN THE CIVIL WAR

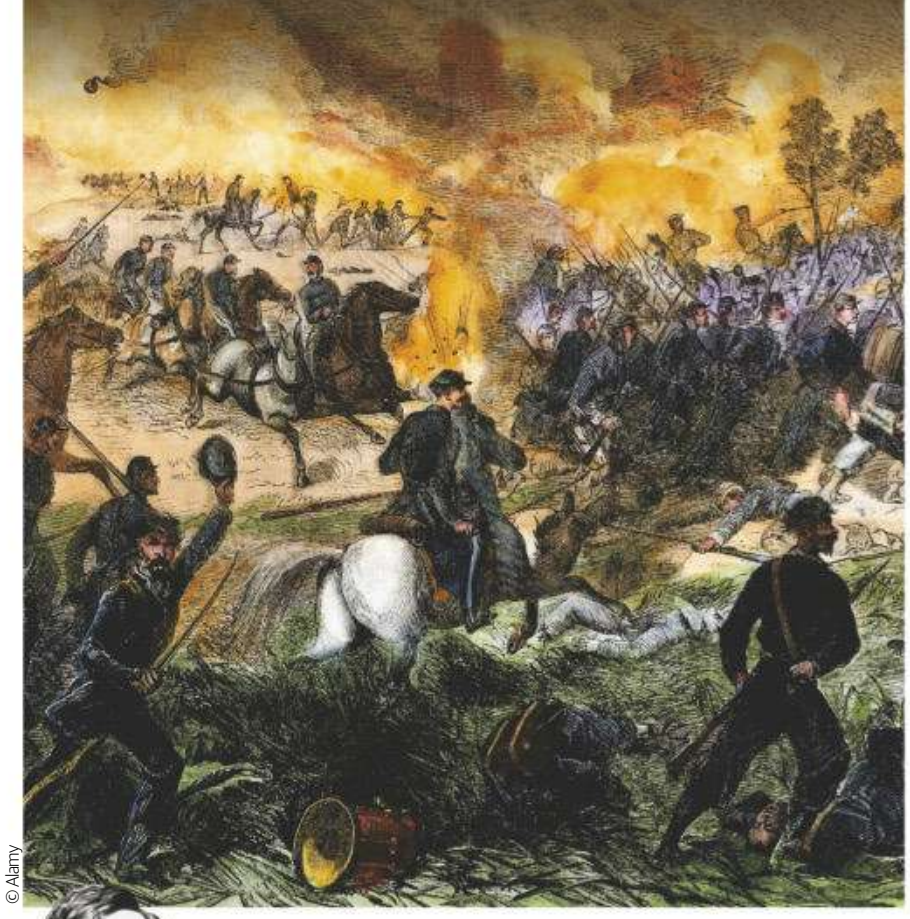
Main image source: © GettyImages

Written by Jessica Leggett, Mike Haskew

Key Events

1861 FIRST BATTLE OF BULL RUN
21 JULY 1861

One of the first major battles of the Civil War, the First Battle of Bull Run takes place near Manassas and Bull Run Creek, Virginia. The Confederates emerge victorious, with the Union army retreating to Washington DC.



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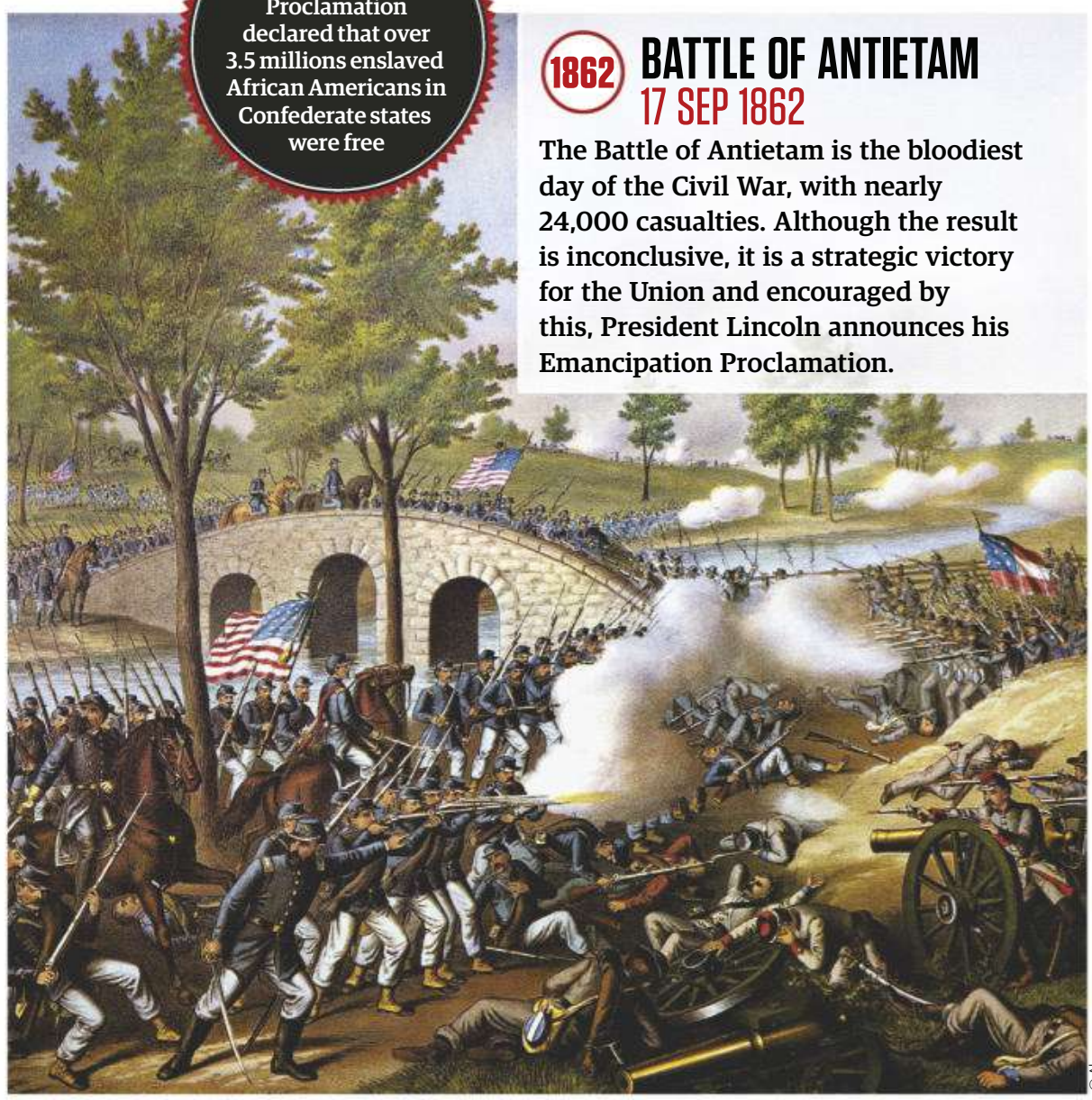
The Emancipation Proclamation declared that over 3.5 millions enslaved African Americans in Confederate states were free

1862 BATTLE OF ANTIETAM
17 SEP 1862

The Battle of Antietam is the bloodiest day of the Civil War, with nearly 24,000 casualties. Although the result is inconclusive, it is a strategic victory for the Union and encouraged by this, President Lincoln announces his Emancipation Proclamation.



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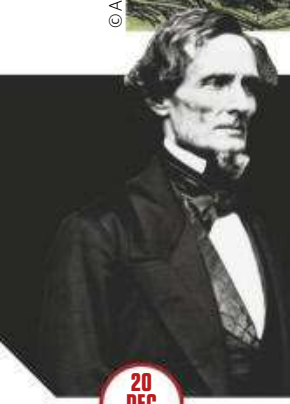


PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT
18 February 1861

After being elected as provisional President of the Confederate States of America, Jefferson Davis is inaugurated in a ceremony held in Montgomery, Alabama.

THE CONFISCATION ACT
6 August 1861

The first Confiscation Act is passed, giving Union soldiers the right to take any property – including slaves – that had belonged to rebel Confederate soldiers.

CAPTURE OF NEW ORLEANS
24 APRIL 1862

The city of New Orleans, Louisiana, is captured by a Union invasion fleet. The city is vital as it controls access to the Mississippi River.

20 DEC 1860

21 JULY 1861

17 SEP 1862

BATTLE OF FORT SUMTER
12 – 13 April 1861

In the first exchange of fire during the Civil War, the Confederates capture Fort Sumter, a garrison in Charleston harbour, South Carolina.

BATTLE OF SHILOH
6 – 7 APRIL 1862

The Union scores a crucial victory at the Battle of Shiloh in Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee. It's the bloodiest battle of the Civil War so far, with over 22,000 dead, wounded or captured.

BATTLE OF FREDERICKSBURG
11 – 15 DECEMBER 1862

The Union Army of the Potomac is defeated at the Battle of Fredericksburg, which ends with over 18,000 casualties and greatly damages Union morale.

1860 SOUTH CAROLINA SECEDES 20 DEC 1860

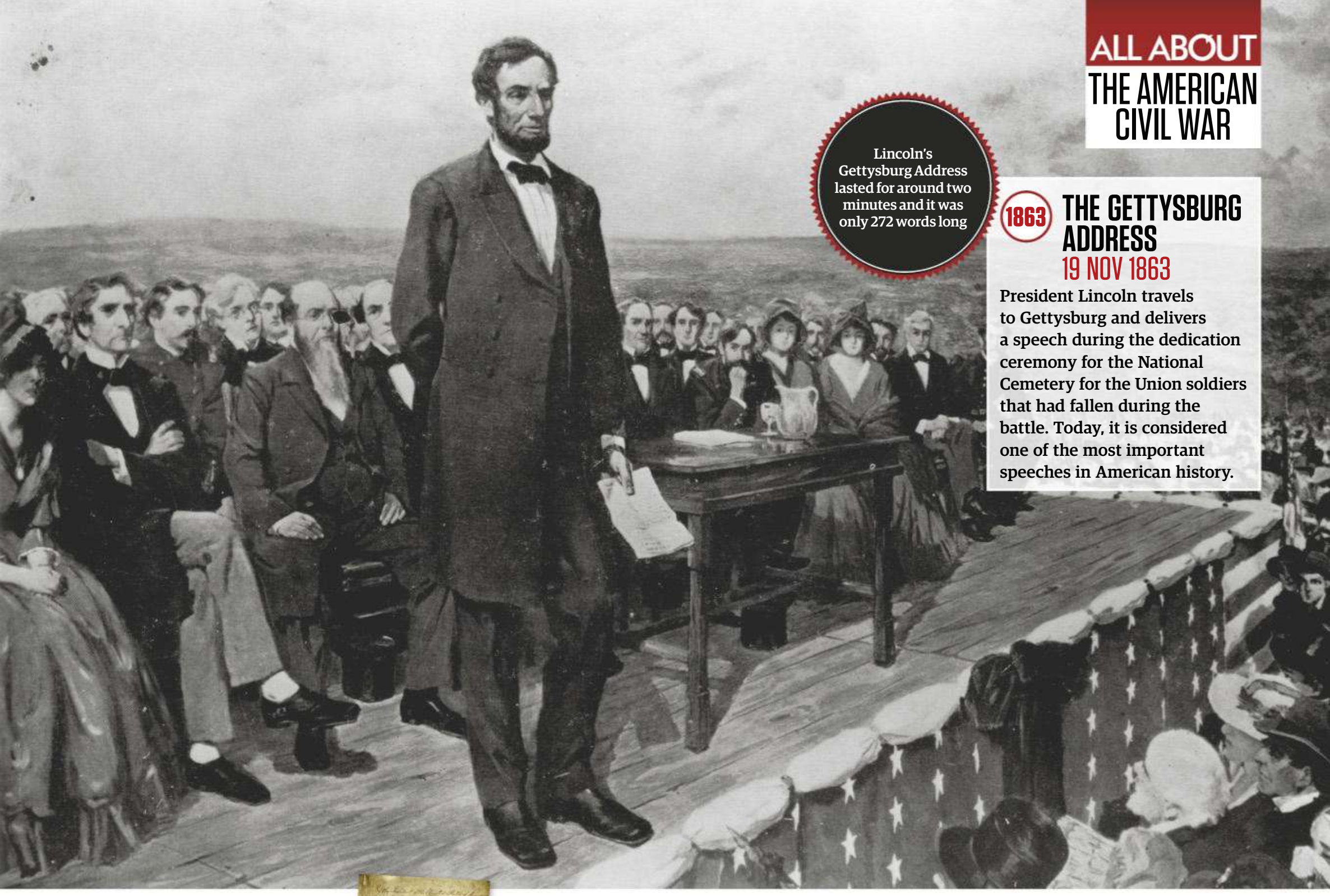
Following the election of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States, South Carolina votes to leave the Union. It is later joined by ten other Southern slave states: Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, North Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Arkansas, Virginia, Tennessee and Georgia. Together, they form the Confederate States of America.

© Getty Images

1863 BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG
1 – 3 JULY 1863

General Lee's invasion of the North is defeated at the Battle of Gettysburg, with the Confederate army retreating. The next day, Confederate forces in the town of Vicksburg, the last Confederate stronghold in Mississippi, surrender to the Union.

© Getty Images



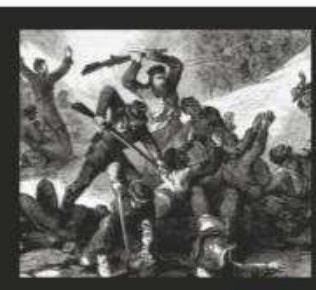
Lincoln's Gettysburg Address lasted for around two minutes and it was only 272 words long

1863 THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS
19 NOV 1863
President Lincoln travels to Gettysburg and delivers a speech during the dedication ceremony for the National Cemetery for the Union soldiers that had fallen during the battle. Today, it is considered one of the most important speeches in American history.

EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION
1 JANUARY 1863
President Lincoln makes the Emancipation Proclamation, which declares "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious Confederate states "are, and henceforward shall be free".

BATTLE OF CHANCELLORSVILLE
30 APRIL – 6 MAY 1863
Confederate General Robert E Lee chooses to split his army into two at the Battle of Chancellorsville, a tactical move that leads to a Confederate victory.

FORT PILLOW MASSACRE
2 APRIL 1864
Around 300 Black Union soldiers are captured and massacred by Confederate troops at Fort Pillow in Tennessee instead of being taken as prisoners of war.



1-3 JULY 1863 · 19 NOV 1863 · 2 SEP 1864 · 14-15 APRIL 1865

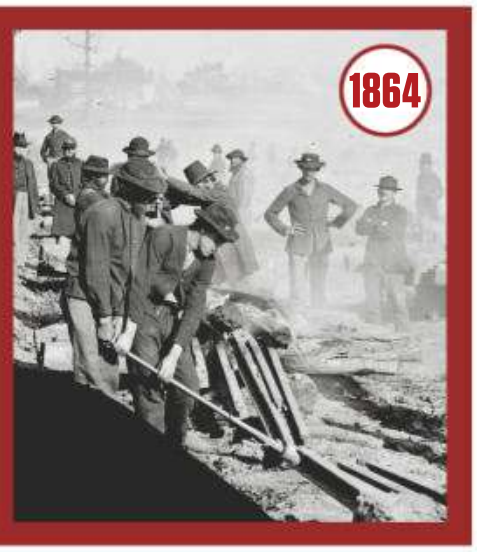
FIRST CONSCRIPTION ACT
3 MARCH 1863
The first Conscription Act in the nation's history is passed by Congress. To avoid serving, the wealthy can pay a $300 exemption fee.

NEW YORK CITY DRAFT RIOTS
13 – 16 JULY 1863
Working-class and mostly Irish New Yorkers protest against the New York draft, but the protests quickly turn into a race riot, with rioters targeting Black people throughout the city.

THE CONFEDERATES SURRENDER 9 APRIL 1865
Robert E Lee surrenders the Army of North Virginia, the last major Confederate army, to Ulysses S Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, effectively bringing an end to the Civil War.

7x © Getty Images

MARCH TO THE SEA
2 SEP 1864
The Union army, under the command of General William Sherman, captures the Confederate stronghold of Atlanta. Marching to Savannah, the army destroys railroads, crops and factories in an effort to break the will of the Confederates.



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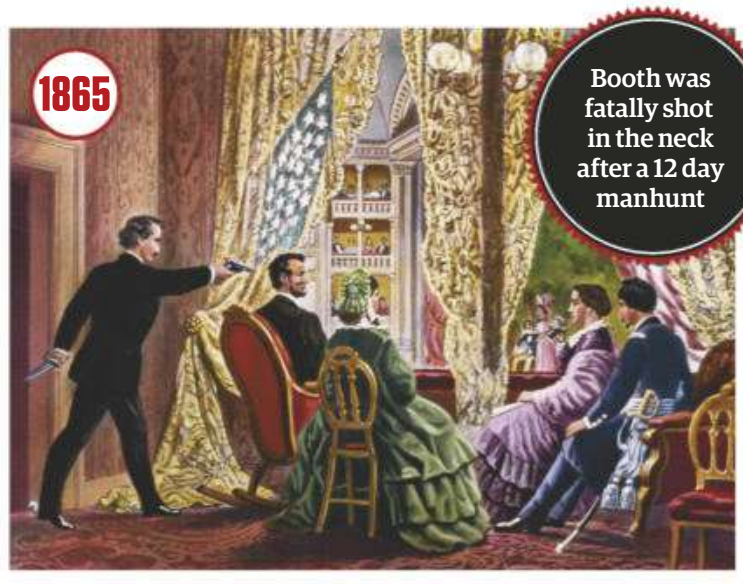
ASSASSINATION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN
14 – 15 APRIL 1865
Five months after his re-election, Lincoln is shot in the back of the head by Southern sympathiser John Wilkes Booth while attending a performance of the play *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theater in Washington DC - Lincoln dies the next day.



SUBMARINE CSS HUNLEY

Charleston, South Carolina, USA 1863-64

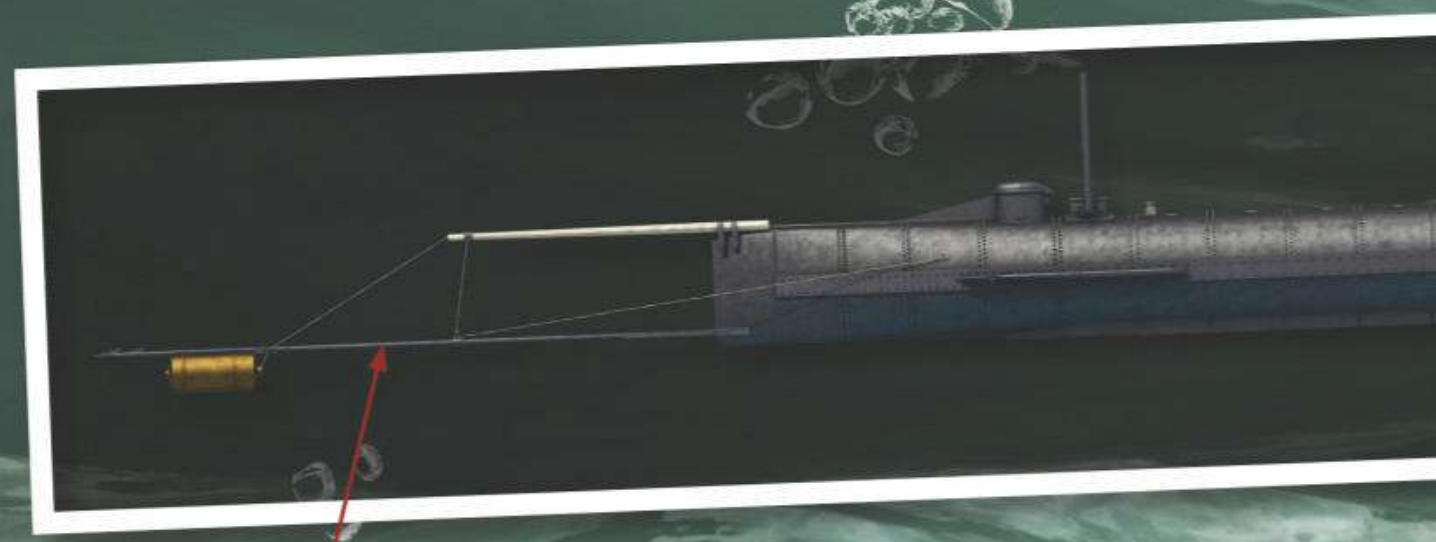
On the night of 17 February 1864, the submarine CSS Hunley became the first weapon of its kind to sink an enemy ship, before meeting its own demise in the attack.

Constructed by the firm Park and Lyons in Mobile, Alabama, the submarine was the brainchild of Horace L Hunley, a lawyer, planter and innovator from New Orleans. Other experiments had been disappointing, but the Hunley design was believed workable, even after two trial deployments ended in tragedies that cost the lives 13 men, including Horace Hunley.

Under control of the Confederate Army, Hunley slipped beneath the harbour waters in Charleston, South Carolina, that fateful night and proceeded toward a cluster of US Navy warships blockading the major Confederate seaport. Under the command of Lieutenant George E Dixon, the crew of eight steered toward the 16-gun sloop of war USS Housatonic, which was patrolling 6km off the harbour mouth. Hunley carried a single torpedo full of black powder attached to a five-metre spar, intending to shove the spar into an enemy ship below the waterline, then inflicting a mortal wound.

In the murky darkness, Hunley crept closer to Housatonic, finally ramming the torpedo home. The resulting explosion sent Housatonic to the bottom in five minutes. However, Hunley failed to return, its crew slipping to a watery grave – probably due to the same explosion that doomed Housatonic. Scholarly debate continues as to the exact cause of the submarine's loss.

For more than a century, Hunley's wreck lay submerged in Charleston harbour. In 1995, it was discovered and in the summer of 2000 raised to the surface for the first time in 136 years. Since then, archaeologists and conservators have worked to preserve, interpret and tell the story of Hunley, which is on display today in North Charleston, near the site where its fateful final mission began.



SPAR AND TORPEDO

Hunley's five-metre spar was tipped with a torpedo filled with black powder, designed to produce a catastrophic explosion after being rammed into the hull of a Union warship below the waterline. The weapon worked during the attack on the US Navy sloop of war Housatonic, but Hunley did not survive its only combat mission, probably disabled by the same explosion that sank Housatonic on the night of 17 February 1864.

CONNING TOWERS & HATCHES

Hunley was constructed with a pair of small but prominent conning towers located fore and aft that offered limited visibility when the submarine was underway. The conning towers were also equipped with hatches for crew ingress and egress. Although the hatches were quite narrow, measuring only 42cm wide and 53cm long, researchers were surprised to discover that they were somewhat larger than originally believed.

INTERNAL BALLAST TANKS

Hunley was fitted with ballast tanks both at the bow and the stern to provide additional weight for submersion and to assist the submarine in remaining on an even keel. These tanks could be flooded by manually opening valves and were pumped dry by hand to lighten the submarine, which weighed 6.8 metric tons.

EMERGENCY IRON WEIGHTS

Large iron weights were bolted directly to the external hull of Hunley and were intended to be jettisoned in the event of an emergency that required the submarine to surface rapidly. To remove the weights, the crewmen were to unscrew the bolt heads from inside Hunley; however, the procedure was inherently risky given the probable dearth of light – perhaps from only a burning candle – and the necessity of rapid execution.

PROVIDING ADEQUATE VENTILATION

A pair of snorkels were attached to Hunley's hull just abaft of the forward conning tower. These could be raised and lowered as needed. Along with an accompanying bellows system installed just behind the commander's position, the snorkels were used to pump fresh air into the crew compartment, which otherwise would run out of oxygen within a short time.

DEAD LIGHTS

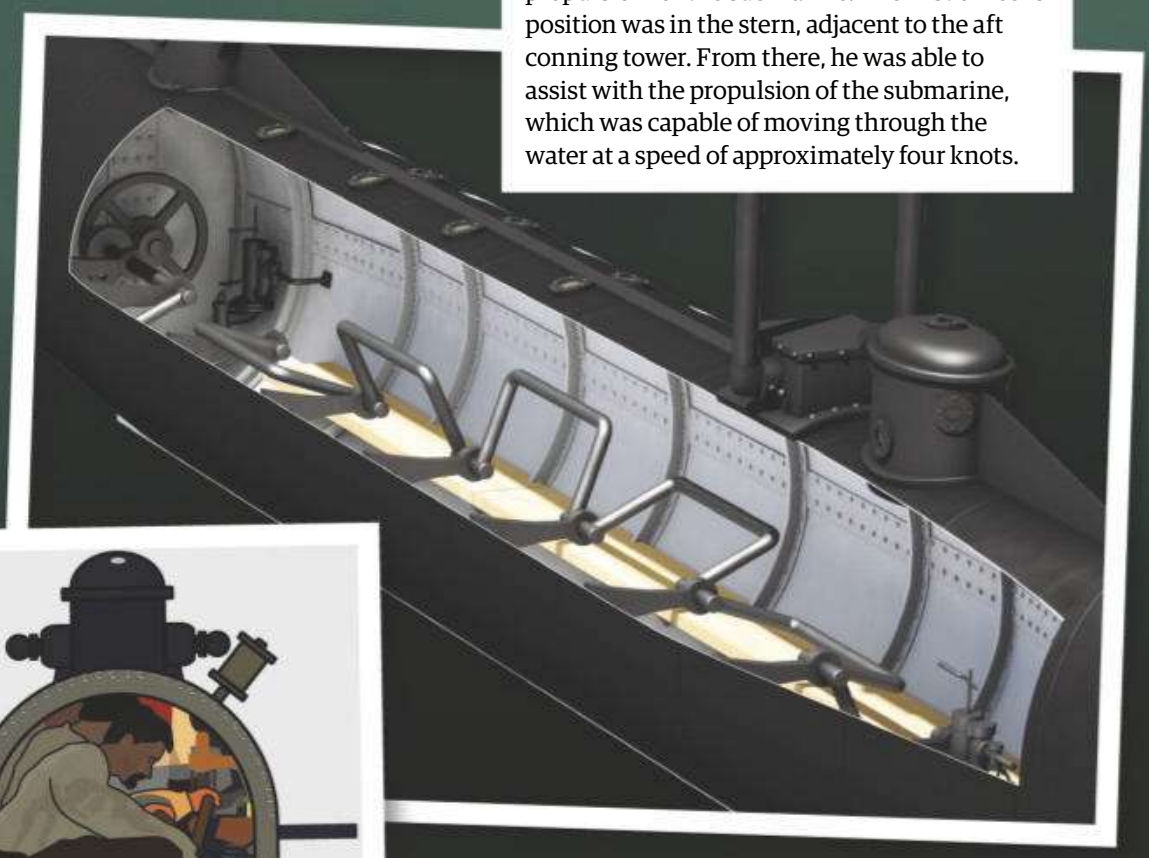
Once the crew of eight men had occupied Hunley, the interior of the submarine was cramped and dark. A series of 'dead lights' was installed atop the spine of the submarine to provide as much ambient light as possible, facilitating the work of the crew with wrenches and other tools that were used to make Hunley watertight and allow entry and exit.

PROPELLER AND RUDDER

The hand-cranked propeller of Hunley turned at the speed generated by the crew's exertion, and operating the crank was backbreaking work. The propeller was protected by an external iron ring and was offset to the starboard side of the submarine. The rudder was located at the rear of the submarine and answered the helm, steering Hunley through the murky waters of Charleston harbour on the night of 17 February 1864.

CREW COMPARTMENT

The eight members of the Hunley crew consisted of the commander, first officer and six enlisted men. The crew compartment included a bench to accommodate seven men as they turned a hand crank to provide propulsion for the submarine. The first officer's position was in the stern, adjacent to the aft conning tower. From there, he was able to assist with the propulsion of the submarine, which was capable of moving through the water at a speed of approximately four knots.



COMMANDER'S POSITION

Lieutenant George E Dixon took the Hunley helm forward of the lead conning tower, where the steering controls were located. Dixon, originally an infantry officer, had been wounded at Shiloh in April 1862, a Union bullet glancing off a $20 gold piece in his pocket, likely saving his life. Dixon had the coin inscribed and kept it as a good luck piece. In 2002, it was found between clothing folds as his remains were examined.

EXTERNAL DIVE PLANES

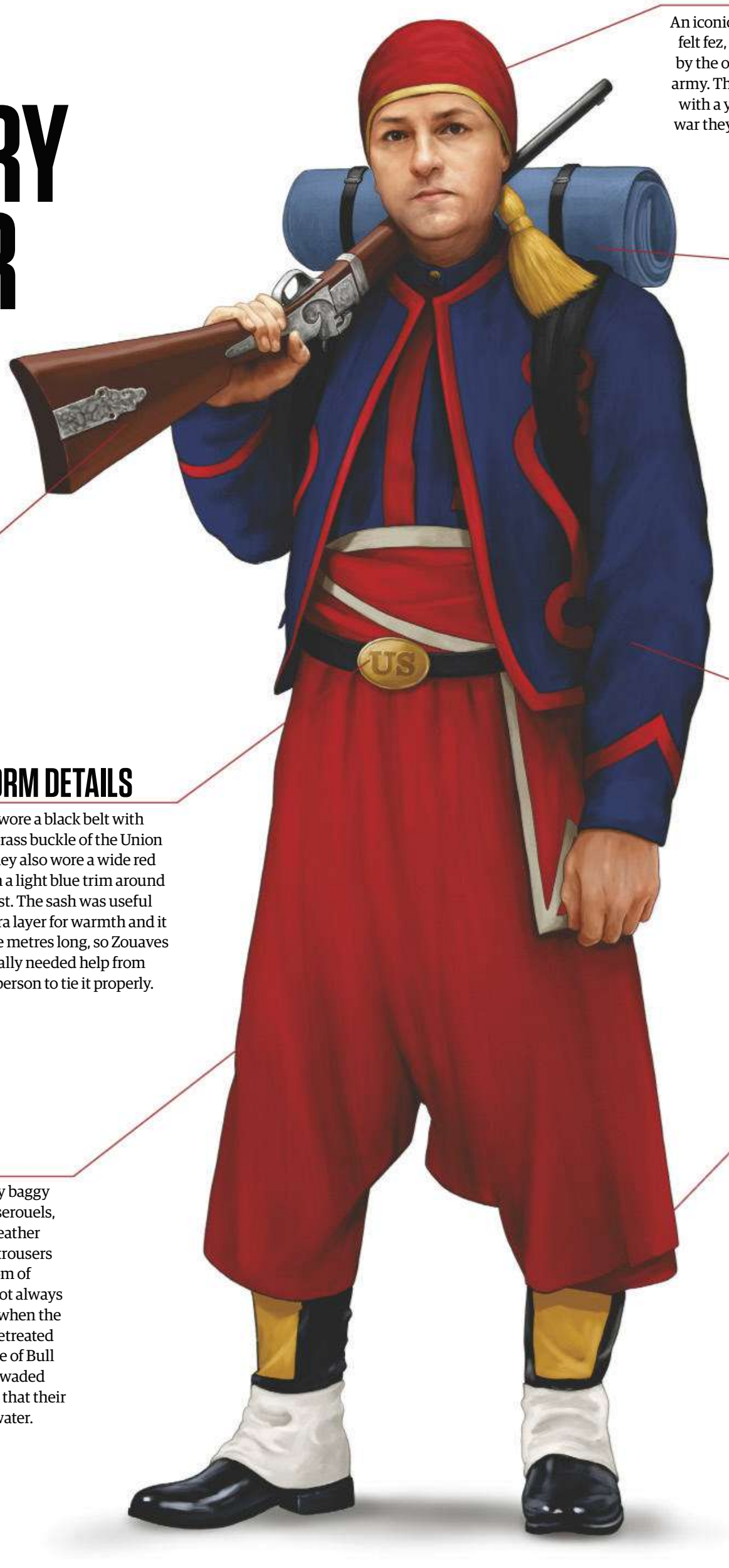
External dive planes, shaped like wings, were attached to the starboard and port sides of Hunley's hull. These were manipulated by the commander, angling them upward or downward to control the depth of the submarine while underway. During an exploratory dive in 1995, a portion of Hunley was cleared of silt, exposing the dive plane on the port side of the submarine and yielding a preliminary measurement of Hunley's length at 11 meters.

Illustration by: Adrian Mann

Anatomy

ZOUAVE INFANTRY SOLDIER

United States 1861-63



UNIQUE HEADGEAR

An iconic part of the Zouave uniform was the red felt fez, one of many elements that was inspired by the original Zouaves regiments of the French army. The 5th New York Zouaves wore red fezzes with a yellow tassel, and at the beginning of the war they sometimes wore white turbans as well.

STANDARD ISSUE

All of the Zouaves were equipped with typical items such as a black knapsack for their personal belongings, a haversack for food rations, a woollen blanket, a cap box, a cartridge box for their ammunition, a bayonet scabbard, a mess kit and a water canteen.

SHARPSHOOTING FIREARM

Several regiments in the North, including the Duryée's Zouaves, were equipped with a .52-caliber Model 1859 Sharps rifle. These breech-loading rifles had a rapid-fire capability and used paper cartridge ammunition.

UNIFORM DETAILS

Zouaves wore a black belt with the 'US' brass buckle of the Union Army. They also wore a wide red sash with a light blue trim around their waist. The sash was useful as an extra layer for warmth and it was three metres long, so Zouaves occasionally needed help from another person to tie it properly.

DISTINCTIVE DRESS

The Zouave regiments of the Civil War and their uniforms were inspired by the Zouave units of the French Army, which originally recruited native Algerian troops. Soldiers wore a dark blue, short open jacket with no buttons and a dark blue shirt, both of which were finished with red trim.

VOLUMINOUS TROUSERS

Zouaves wore extremely baggy red trousers, known as serouels, with white gaiters and leather leggings. Although the trousers allowed for more freedom of movement, they were not always practical – it is said that when the 5th New York Zouaves retreated during the Second Battle of Bull Run in 1862, those who waded through a stream found that their trousers filled up with water.

RENOWNED REPUTATION

This is the uniform of the 5th New York Volunteer Infantry, also known as Duryée's Zouaves, which was founded and commanded by Colonel Abram Duryée. Easily recognisable due to their distinctive and colourful uniform, they were considered to be one of the greatest fighting regiments of the American Civil War.

Illustration by: Kevin McGivern

Historical Treasures

ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN MEDAL

Lincoln's election paved the way for the outbreak of the American Civil War, USA, 1860

On 6 November 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected the 16th President of the United States by a landslide, winning 180 electoral college votes. He was only the second Republican nominee to run for president and he was the first to win, triumphing over the candidates of the divided Democratic Party and the Constitutional Union Party.

Tensions over slavery and states' rights between the North and South had reached boiling point in the lead up to the election. The Republicans had adopted a moderate stance on slavery and wished to limit its expansion, and so it was predicted that if Lincoln won the election then the Southern states would subsequently withdraw from the Union. This prediction was accurate because on 20 December, just over a month after Lincoln's victory, South Carolina announced that it was seceding from the Union.

By the time of Lincoln's inauguration in March 1861, another six states had seceded and the Confederate States of America had been formally established. Lincoln believed that the secession of these states was illegal and refused to accept it, although he wished to avoid going to war. However, the Civil War broke out that April following the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter, with Lincoln calling for 75,000 volunteers to join the Union Army.

The 1864 presidential election went ahead even though the bitter Civil War raged on. Although he believed that his chances of winning were slim, Lincoln stood for re-election against the Democratic candidate George McClellan, the president's former general-in-chief of the army.

Despite his apprehension, Lincoln was re-elected by a landslide with 55% of the popular vote, winning 212 electoral votes and 22 states. His victory demonstrated the North's continued support for both his leadership and policies, with the majority of Union soldiers also casting their vote for him. It was also the first time that a president had won a second term since Andrew Jackson in 1832.

In the 19th century, presidential candidates did not actively campaign during elections like they do today. However, their parties and supporters would lobby on their behalf. As part of their campaign advertising, they would give away or sell campaign buttons and medals such as this photographic one.

LINCOLN'S PORTRAIT

This tintype photograph of Lincoln is a reversed copy of the famous 'Cooper Union' carte de visite made by famed photographer Mathew B Brady on 27 February 1860. The photo is perhaps the best-known photographic portrait of the era.

HAMLIN'S PORTRAIT

The tintype photograph of Lincoln's running mate, Hannibal Hamlin, on the reverse side of the medal is a copy of a portrait by an unknown artist. Stamped around the edge of the frame is "Abraham Lincoln 1860" on the obverse and "Hannibal Hamlin 1860" on the reverse.

POLITICAL ADVERTISING

Although political medals and buttons have been used since the time of President George Washington, this is the world's first political campaign medallion to use a photo. Another photo medallion was created for Lincoln's re-election campaign in 1864.

MASS PRODUCTION

The maker of the medal is unknown, but they likely produced a large number of them for the Republican Party, either to be given away or sold at their headquarters throughout the United States.

Image source: Metropolitan Museum of New York

Hall of Fame

ABOLITIONISTS

Ten people who bravely fought for the end of slavery in the United States

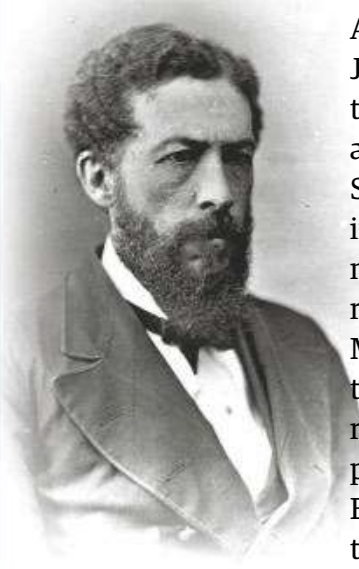
Sojourner Truth
1797 – 1883

Sojourner Truth was born into slavery, managing to escape in 1827. A devout Christian, she became a preacher, travelling around the United States speaking about abolition and women's rights. Her most famous anti-slavery and women's rights speech, during which she uttered the phrase "Ain't I a Woman?" was delivered at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in 1851. Truth continued to speak out on abolition both during and after the Civil War, and she helped to recruit Black soldiers and refugees. In recognition of her efforts for the abolition movement, she was invited to the White House by President Abraham Lincoln.

Unable to read or write, Truth dictated her autobiography, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, in 1850

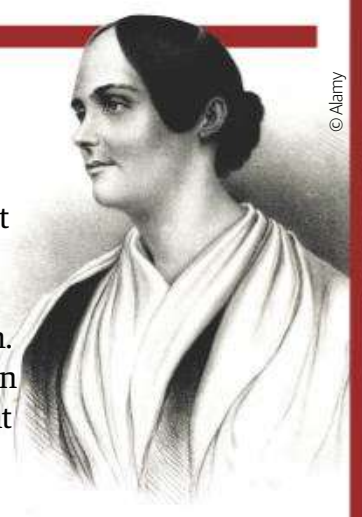
9x © Getty Images

JOHN MERCER LANGSTON 1829-97



Abolitionist, attorney and politician John Mercer Langston was one of the first African Americans to hold an elective office in the United States, becoming the township clerk in Brownhelm, Ohio, in 1855. In the midst of the Civil War, he helped to recruit Black soldiers for the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, the Union Army's first Black regiment. Towards the end of his political career, he became the first Black man to represent Virginia in the US House of Representatives.

ABBY KELLEY FOSTER
1811-87



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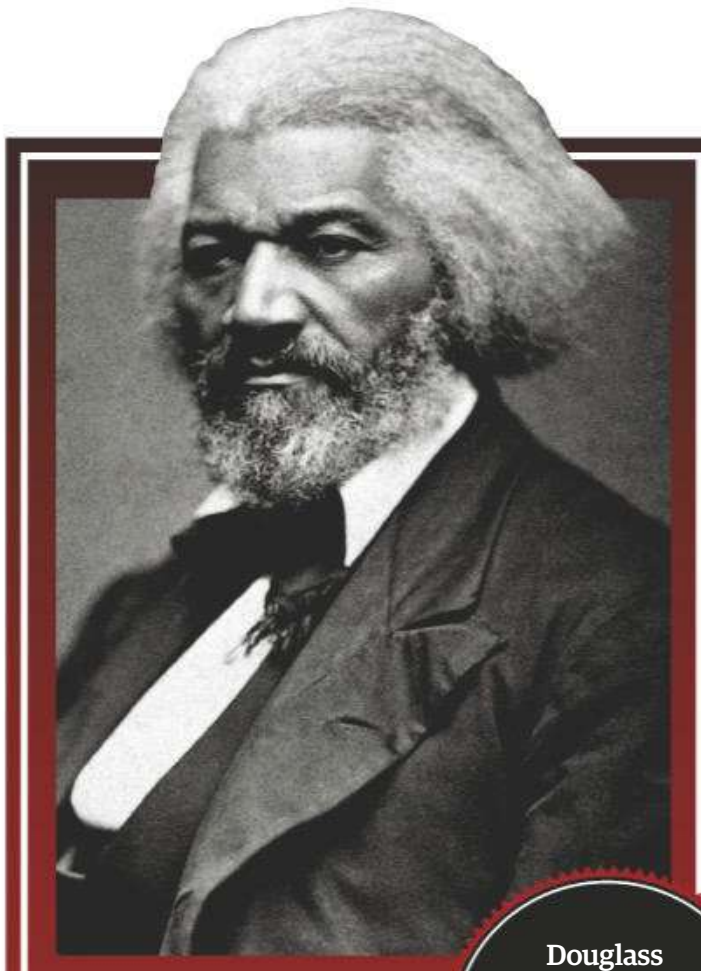
Abby Kelley Foster was an abolitionist lecturer and fundraiser for the American Anti-Slavery Society and a supporter of immediate emancipation. At the second Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women in 1838, a defiant Foster delivered her first speech against slavery, despite facing mob violence. Her home was used as a stop on the Underground Railroad but she opposed the violence of the American Civil War. After the war, Foster fought for the 15th Amendment, which gave African American men the right to vote.

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON
1805-79

Considered one of the most radical voices of the abolitionist movement, William Lloyd Garrison founded the weekly abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator* in 1831. Advocating for the immediate emancipation of enslaved people, Garrison's newspaper remained in print throughout the Civil War and it even inspired Frederick Douglass to start his own abolitionist paper. He eventually retired in December 1865 following the end of the Civil War and two years after the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation. An early and influential abolitionist who founded the American Anti-Slavery Society, Garrison inspired many of the other abolitionists included here.



Douglass founded a weekly anti-slavery newspaper, *The North Star*, in 1847

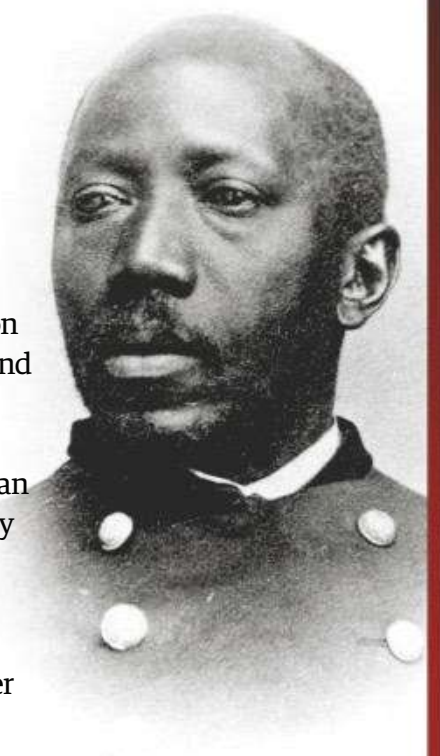
Frederick Douglass
c.1818-95

African American abolitionist Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in Maryland, before he managed to escape to New York City in 1838. Seven years later, he published his influential autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself*. The book was an instant success and helped to promote the abolitionist cause, and in 1855 Douglass published his second book, *My Bondage and My Freedom*. A celebrated writer and a great orator, Douglass was a lecturer for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and he helped to recruit Black soldiers for the Union during the Civil War.

Lucretia Mott
1793 – 1880

Lucretia Mott was an important abolitionist and reformer who was known for her powerful speeches. She was the only woman to speak at the inaugural meeting of the American Anti-Slavery society and she also founded the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, which supported many future female abolitionists. Mott also took part in the Underground Railroad. As a pacifist, she opposed the American Civil War but nonetheless welcomed the North's victory because it lead to the abolition of slavery.

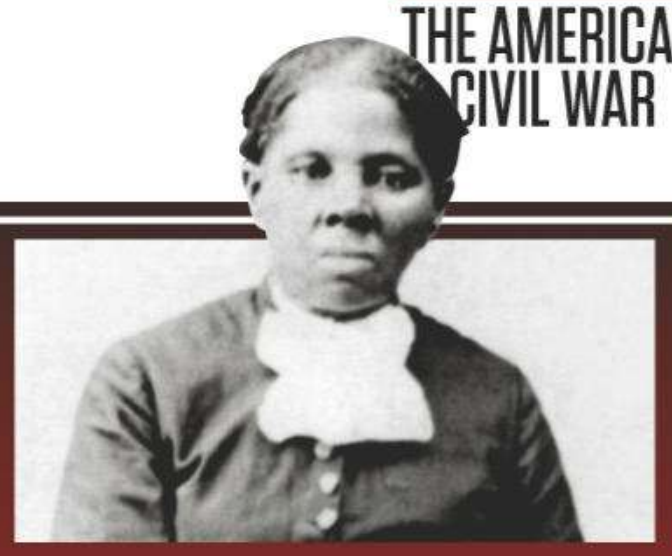
MARTIN ROBISON DELANY
1812-85



Often considered to be the 'father of Black nationalism', Martin Robison Delany was one of the earliest African Americans to encourage a return to Africa. Like many other abolitionists, Delany recruited troops for the Union Army during the Civil War and he also persuaded President Lincoln to create all-Black Corps led by African American officers. He was subsequently appointed as a major in the 52nd US Colored Troops regiment, becoming the first African American field officer in the US army.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE
1811-96

Abolitionist author Harriet Beecher Stowe is most famous for her anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which highlighted the realities of slavery and the plight of enslaved people. Stowe's novel was popular in the North and encouraged others to speak out against slavery. However, it was also very controversial and caused widespread anger in the South – it has been argued that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* inflamed existing tensions and helped to sow the seeds for the American Civil War.



Harriet Tubman
1822 – 1913

After escaping slavery, leading abolitionist Harriet Tubman became one of the most famous conductors of the Underground Railroad, risking her life to lead enslaved people from the South to freedom, without ever being caught. During the Civil War, Tubman worked as a cook, nurse and spy for the Union Army, providing intelligence on Confederate troops and supply routes. She also led the Raid on Combahee Ferry in South Carolina, which liberated hundreds of slaves, with Tubman becoming the first woman to lead an armed expedition. Today, Tubman is one of the most recognisable figures in American history.

Susan B Anthony
1820 – 1906

A Quaker who believed that every human was equal in the eyes of God, activist Susan B Anthony dedicated her life to fighting for the rights of others. An abolitionist from an early age, she became an American Anti-Slavery society agent and delivered numerous anti-slavery speeches. During the Civil War, she worked alongisde Elizabeth Cady Stanton to organise the Woman's Loyal League, which gathered petitions to outlaw slavery. As well as being a leading figure of the abolitionist movement, Anthony was also a pioneer of the women's suffrage movement, serving as president of the National American woman Suffrage Association.

Anthony's family home in Rochester became a meeting place from many prominent abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass

Q&A

WOMEN IN THE CIVIL WAR

DeAnne Blanton uncovers the forgotten stories of female soldiers who fought on the front lines

Why did women, on both sides, choose to enlist during the American Civil War?

The three main reasons that women enlisted in the armies were love, money and patriotism. Nearly a third of documented women soldiers went to war with their husbands or sweethearts. Unattached women, particularly those from the working class, were enticed by the monthly pay that soldiers received. And other women wanted to fight for their country.

Women were forbidden from enlisting in the army, so how did they get away with it?

It was surprisingly easy for women to pass as men in the mid-19th century, and working-class women in particular had passed as men prior to the Civil War, in search of economic opportunity. Gender roles in Victorian society were so strict and so entrenched that the mere act of cutting one's hair, binding one's breasts and putting on trousers made a woman appear to be a man in the eyes of society. Being a soldier was so antithetical to social notions of women's place and capabilities that no one even thought to look for a woman in the ranks. Plus, there was such a rush to get men into the armies that most enlisted men did not undergo a physical examination. Given that a significant number of underage boys were in the army, most women soldiers were perceived to be teenaged boys rather than full-grown men.

What was it like for the female soldiers who fought on the front line?

Women soldiers endured every hardship and horror that war has to offer, just like the male soldiers. Nevertheless, a number of women liked life in the army because they liked being perceived as men. Women passing as men, whether in civilian or military life, experienced all the freedoms that were denied to 19th-century women: the right to vote, the right to live their life as they saw fit, the right to handle their own affairs and the ability to earn a living wage.

How did these women prevent their true identities from being uncovered by their fellow soldiers?

It was fairly easy for women to hide their sex if the army was in the field, as this type of camp life provided opportunities for privacy. Women were usually detected when they ended up in confined spaces, such as hospitals and prisoner of war camps. Indeed, there is evidence of sick and wounded female soldiers refusing medical care for fear of being discovered. There is also evidence that, in some cases, a male soldier in a woman's company did figure it out, but opted to keep her secret because she was well-liked and a good soldier. In these cases, the bonds forged in war were stronger than societal norms.

Why have the contributions of female soldiers during the American Civil War remained largely overlooked?

Women soldiers are statistically irrelevant if one looks at the Civil War in strictly military terms. Their participation did not alter the course of any event, so military historians are unlikely to mention them, or even be aware of them. Social historians and women's historians are more likely to recognise the significance of women who flouted cultural norms. But women soldiers are very difficult to document because they were passing as men. The historical record only gives us information about the women who were caught. The most successful women soldiers – those who were never outed as women – are largely lost to us. So we will never know the full story of their audacity, their bravery and their commitment to cause and to country.

> **"Some wounded female soldiers refused medical care for fear of being discovered"**

DeAnne Blanton is a senior archivist at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, DC, specialising in 19th-century US Army records. She has appeared in more than a dozen documentaries and television programs relating to the Civil War.

RIGHT Union soldier Kady Brownell was declared the 'Heroine of Newbern' after risking her life for her fellow soldiers during the Battle of New Bern (1862)

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Headshot source: DeAnne Blanton

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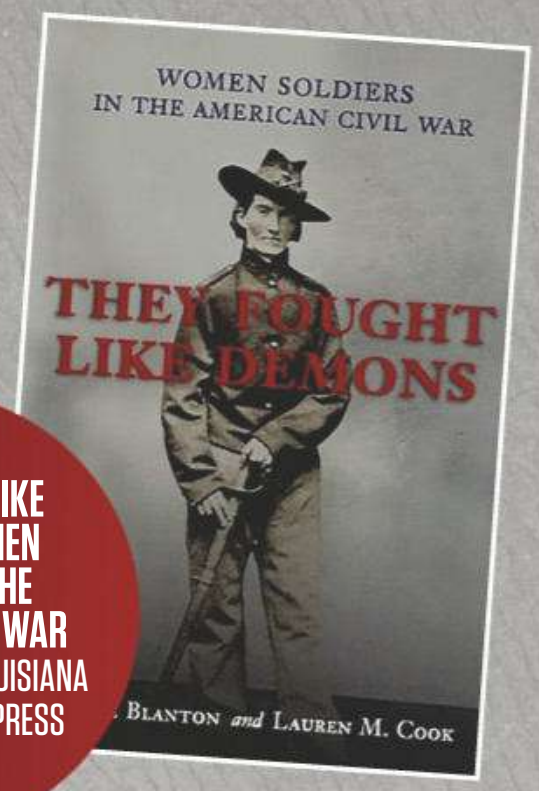

RIGHT American actress Pauline Cushman served as a spy for the Union Army during the Civil War

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Places to Explore

CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELDS

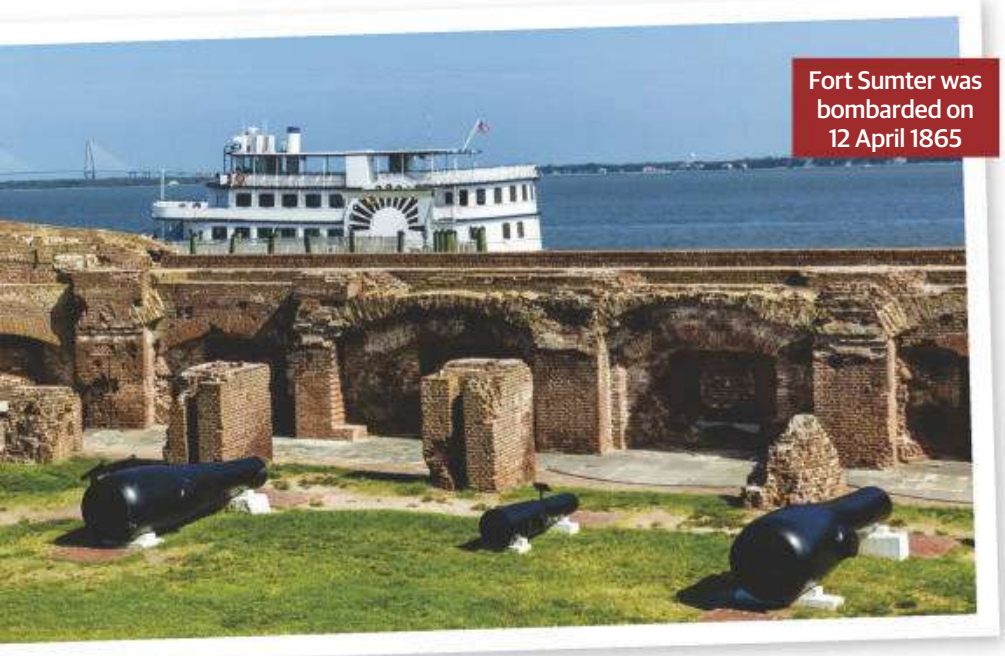
Visit the places where bitter fighting decided the fate of a nation

1 FORT SUMTER AND FORT MOULTRIE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

The first shots of the American Civil War were fired on Fort Sumter, situated on an island in mouth of the harbour at Charleston, South Carolina, on 12 April 1865. After hours of bombardment by Confederate batteries ringing the harbour, the Union garrison, under Major Robert Anderson, surrendered to the Confederates under General PGT Beauregard. In the wake of the surrender, President Abraham Lincoln issued a call for Union volunteers, while young men in the southern states flocked to the Confederate banner. From the Fort Sumter Visitor Education Center at Liberty Square, where a few exhibits depicting South Carolina's heritage of secession may be viewed, visitors reach Fort Sumter via boats operated by Fort Sumter Tours and examine a fine example of a pre-Civil War masonry fort along with cannon and other period artefacts. Areas of Fort Sumter still exhibit shell damage from the bombardment, while concrete casemates constructed decades later remain visible. Fort Moultrie, located on nearby Sullivan's Island, is accessible by car and offers exhibits from the fort's history dating back to the Revolutionary War, when the position was first fortified with logs.

Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Historical Park is open daily from 9am to 5pm except New Year's, Thanksgiving and Christmas Days. Boat service to Fort Sumter begins at 9:30am and is available from downtown Charleston and Patriots Point/Mount Pleasant in addition to the Visitor Education Center. Fort Moultrie is closed Monday and Tuesday, although the grounds are open. Available through Fort Sumter Tours, tickets are $30.



Fort Sumter was bombarded on 12 April 1865

2 ANTIETAM NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

SHARPSBURG, MARYLAND

The 132nd Pennsylvania Infantry Monument at the battlefield

The Battle of Antietam, the single bloodiest day in American military history, was the climax of General Robert E Lee's first invasion of the North during the Civil War. His Confederate Army of Northern Virginia fought the Union Army of the Potomac, under General George B McClellan, on 16-17 September 1862. During 12 hours of fighting on the 17th approximately 23,000 men were killed or wounded. After the battle, photographers recorded chilling images of the carnage. A number of these iconic photographs are visible along with interpretive texts. Visitors may take a driving tour that describes such famous locales as the Dunker Church, the Cornfield, Bloody Lane, and Burnside Bridge, where the fighting raged. Handsome monuments mark points of interest across the landscape, and the observation tower at Bloody Lane offers a distant perspective of the battlefield and the surrounding countryside. Numerous artefacts, including furnishings from surrounding homes that survived the battle, are on display at the visitors' centre. An orientation film runs regularly, and special programs are held often.

The Antietam National Battlefield visitors centre is open daily 9am to 4pm, except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Days. The park entrance fee is $10 per individual or $20 per vehicle.

Defeat at Gettysburg was a huge blow for the South

3 GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK
GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

The most famous battle of the Civil War, Gettysburg was the turning point of the conflict in the Eastern theatre. During three days of fighting (1-3 July 1863) General Robert E Lee's second invasion of the North was thwarted as his Confederate Army of Northern Virginia was defeated by the Union Army of the Potomac under General George G Meade. Heavy combat took place at such locations as Cemetery Hill, Cemetery Ridge, Devils Den, Little Round Top, Culp's Hill and Seminary Ridge. The failure of Pickett's Charge on 3 July is remembered as the "high water mark of the Confederacy". Visitors may take a driving tour that includes the High Water Mark memorial adjacent to the "copse of trees" objective of the famous charge. You can also view the Valley of Death, the Peach Orchard and the Wheatfield, where fighting was particularly severe.

Impressive monuments are located throughout the park, such as those to Pennsylvania troops, several prominent generals, and memorials to Confederate soldiers along Seminary Ridge. President Abraham Lincoln delivered his famed Gettysburg Address on 19 November 1863, and the site is marked in the national cemetery among the resting places of Union soldiers killed during the battle. The visitors centre houses a fine museum along with the breathtaking cyclorama by artist Paul Philippoteaux depicting Pickett's Charge. The town of Gettysburg and the Eisenhower National Historic Site, home of President Dwight D Eisenhower, are worthwhile experiences as well.

The Gettysburg National Park Visitors Center is open daily from 9am to 4pm, with extended hours until 5pm from May to September. The centre is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Days. Adult tickets range from $9 for the museum experience only to $15 for the museum, cyclorama and orientation film.

4 CHICKAMAUGA & CHATTANOOGA NATIONAL MILITARY PARK
CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE; FORT OGLETHORPE, GEORGIA

Wilder Tower overlooks the Chickamauga battlefield

Chickamauga-Chattanooga, the nation's oldest and largest national military park, preserves the battlefield of Chickamauga, where the Confederate Army of Tennessee defeated the Union Army of the Cumberland during the largest battle in the Civil War's Western theatre (18-20 September, 1863). You can tour the extensive Fuller Gun Collection, view detailed exhibits, and learn about the heroic Union stand under General George Thomas, the Rock of Chickamauga. In the wake of their Chickamauga victory, Confederate forces laid siege to the Union Army in Chattanooga, gateway to the Deep South. However, General Ulysses S Grant assumed command in the city, launching assaults on Orchard Knob, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge on 23-25 November 1863, raising the siege and setting the stage for the Atlanta campaign. Many Civil War sites in Chattanooga are preserved as reservations, while a small visitors centre operates at Point Park on Lookout Mountain.

The visitor centers at Chickamauga and Lookout Mountain are open daily from 8:30am to 5pm except Christmas and New Year's Days. Admission to the Chickamauga visitors centre is free, while Point Park visitors centre is $10 for adults over 16.

The Illinois Memorial at the Vicksburg National Military Park

5 VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK
VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI

Control of the Mississippi River was settled by the fighting around the city of Vicksburg, Mississippi, and the subsequent siege that lasted from 18 May to 4 July 1863. This culminated with the surrender of troops of the Confederate Army of Mississippi to the Union Army of the Tennessee.

Visitors to Vicksburg National Military Park can view over 1,400 monuments and memorials honouring the veterans of the siege. Orientation materials are available at the visitors center, ranger programs and interpretive events are regularly held, and visitors may choose a self-directed auto tour or enlist a guide. Located on Tour Road, the USS Cairo Gunboat and Museum features the preserved shallow-draft river ironclad USS Cairo, raised from the mud of the nearby Yazoo River with a trove of artefacts aboard and restored before being placed on permanent display. Visitors are also familiarised with the privations of siege warfare as the citizens of Vicksburg sought shelter from Union bombardment, some of them abandoning their homes and living in caves along the cliffs above the mighty Mississippi.

The Vicksburg National Military Park Visitors Center is located at 3201 Clay Street, Vicksburg, Mississippi. Fees are $20 per vehicle or $10 per individual. Commercial tours are available, ranging from $25 to $100. The motorcycle fee is $15. The park is generally open daily from 8:30am to 4:30pm, and it is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Days each year.

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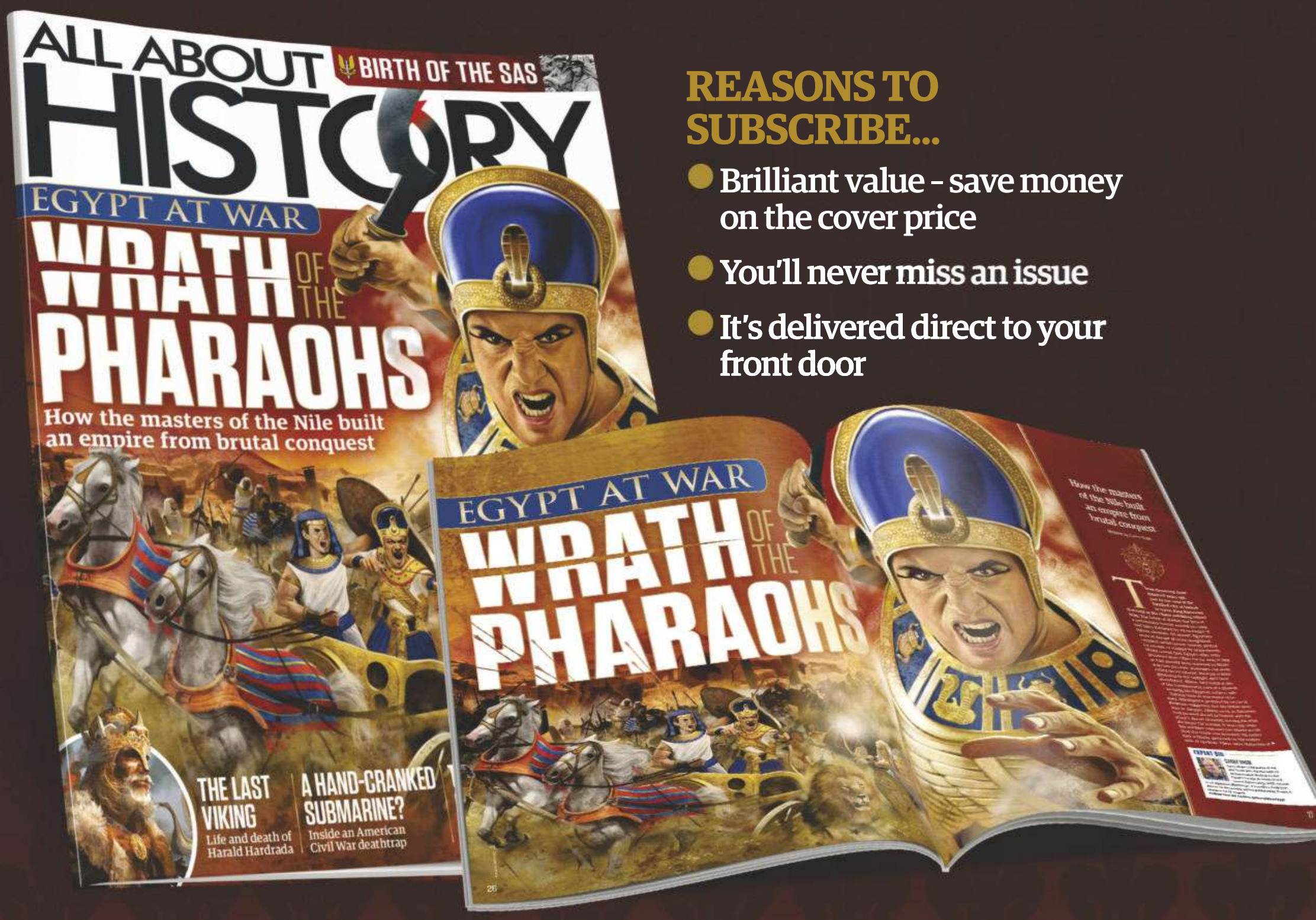
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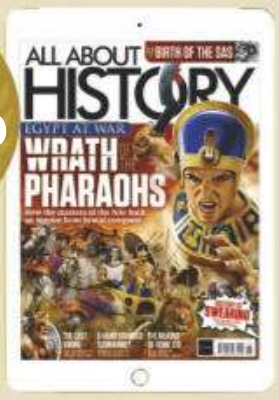

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EGYPT AT WAR

WRATH OF THE PHARAOHS

Illustration by Joe Cummings

How the masters of the Nile built an empire from brutal conquest

Written by Garry Shaw

Three-thousand three-hundred years ago, just to the west of the fortified city of Qadesh in Syria, King Ramesses II stared at the chaos unfolding around him. The fence of shields that formed a rectangular barrier around his camp had been flattened by an onslaught of Hittite chariots. All around, Egyptians were in danger of being slaughtered, crushed under horses' hooves, pierced by arrows, or slashed by sickle-swords. Many troops fled. Egypt's other army divisions were either too far away to help or had already been scattered by Hittite warriors en route. Ramesses was alone, riding on his chariot, his scale-armour gleaming in the sunlight. He'd been abandoned. Worse, he'd failed at one of the fundamental roles of a pharaoh – keeping his Egyptian subjects safe.

Taking Qadesh was meant to be easy. Intelligence provided by two local Bedouin suggested that the Hittite army was in Aleppo, 190km away, so Ramesses had pushed ahead to Qadesh with the army's Amun Division, leaving his other divisions far behind. It was only when his soldiers captured two Hittite scouts that the truth was revealed: his enemy had actually gathered on the eastern side of Qadesh. There were thousands of ▶

EXPERT BIO

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GARRY SHAW

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RIGHT King Seti I raises his mace with one hand and holds enemies with his other, ready to smite them. The god Amun-Re offers the king a weapon, symbolising divine endorsement

troops and chariots. Now, they were on the move. After a hasty council meeting, the vizier ran to warn one of Egypt's nearby divisions, but it was too late. Ramesses' camp would soon be overwhelmed by the Hittites – his Anatolian rivals.

That moment had now arrived. Amid the chaos, as his enemy circled, Ramesses did what many find themselves doing in desperate times: he appealed to the divine. He prayed to the god Amun, his father, asserting his devotion and listing the great deeds he'd accomplished for him. Surely the god wouldn't abandon his son? Like in a movie, when all seemed lost, Amun heard the pharaoh's call and joined him on the battlefield – just in the nick of time. Within moments, thousands of Hittite chariots lay smashed and broken. Guarded by Amun, Ramesses slaughtered his enemies with ease.

When the battle ended, Egypt's soldiers and charioteers returned to camp to face a verbal assault from the pharaoh. Did they forget their training, Ramesses asked. Had he done nothing for them? How could they abandon him? What will people say? The next morning, the Egyptian army once again faced the Hittites. This time, the battle ended with an agreement: the two sides were to return home and there would be peace – for now. But Qadesh would remain in Hittite hands. It was a stalemate.

So goes Ramesses' account of his exploits at Qadesh. If the king is to be believed, it was only Amun's intervention that saved his life. It was he alone who defeated Egypt's enemies – his troops merely cowered in fear. The reality of how events actually played out at Qadesh that day around 1274 BCE is hard to say. One suggestion is that a specially formed Egyptian army division, the Nearin – which took a different route to Qadesh from the others – arrived at Ramesses' camp just in time to surprise the Hittites, and pushed them into retreat. If so, perhaps Ramesses did say a prayer to Amun in his moment of need. And perhaps he truly regarded the Nearin's arrival as Amun's response – after all, a true king had the ear of the gods.

BELOW A reconstruction of a painted fresco depicting a large Ancient Egyptian chariot charge

BOTTOM Egyptian archers shoot arrows at their enemies. In war scenes, Egypt's troops were normally shown on a much smaller scale than the king. From Medinet Habu, Luxor

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The Cosmic Significance of Warfare

When crowned pharaoh, Ramesses II inherited a divine role, already more than a millennia old, that held cosmic significance. He had a duty to protect Egypt's population and expand the country's borders for the gods. Whenever an enemy destabilised Egypt's interests abroad – most often by interrupting trade routes or entering Egyptian-controlled territory – it represented a loss of divine order and balance, a concept that the Egyptians called maat. It was the king's job to fix this. Foreigners weren't simply non-Egyptians causing trouble, but embodiments of disorder threatening the stability of the world. This is why, in state-produced texts and in sacred locations like temples and tombs, foreigners are typically presented in a negative light. They are smited by the king, bitten by animals, and bound in painful positions. This symbolism was so key to Egyptian ideology that the 'nine bows' – symbols representing the totality of Egypt's enemies – were painted on palace floors and woven into royal sandals so that the king crushed his foes underfoot with every step. Give it a try the next time someone puts you in a bad mood.

> "Foreigners weren't simply non-Egyptians causing trouble, but embodiments of disorder threatening the stability of the world"

That the king had this role is not surprising: he was part divine, and Egyptian mythology is filled with warfare and violence. Every day and every night since the beginning of time, the sun god and his followers had fought the enemies of order, represented by the chaos snake Apophis, whose sole aim was to destabilise the cosmos. There are myths describing Horus and Seth's dispute over who should become king of Egypt, after Seth had murdered Osiris, Horus' father. The gods Geb and Shu, father and grandfather of Osiris respectively, also both faced rebels during their mythological reigns.

Clearly, the gods knew a thing or two about warfare. Perhaps this is why the king had to seek their approval before marching abroad on campaign. In war scenes, often carved on temple walls, divine endorsement of a campaign is symbolised by a god handing the king a weapon. After the war, the king is shown executing foreign prisoners before the gods. Normally, he holds his terrified

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enemies by the hair, about to bring his mace down into their skulls. Such smiting scenes are often found at the entrance to temples, intended to magically prevent the disruptive forces of disorder from entering the sacred space.

The First Egyptian Armies

For much of early Pharaonic history, the Egyptian army was non-professional. With little danger from outside forces, there was no need for a standing army, so whenever the king or local leaders needed a fighting force, they simply gathered up men from Egypt's provinces, handed them weapons, and ordered them to march into enemy territory. Mercenaries and prisoners of war, often brought from Nubia and Libya, swelled the numbers. Army leaders were typically chosen because of their loyalty to the king, and so weren't trained warriors. One such individual, a man named Weni, had been a master of the royal robing room and a judge before the king sent him to lead thousands of troops into the Levant. He clearly had a knack for the job because he returned a hero, and was sent out five more times to fight Egypt's enemies.

The army's main battle tactic was to overwhelm the enemy, then decimate their land and resources, removing the

KEY BATTLES

Important clashes that defined the Egyptian Empire

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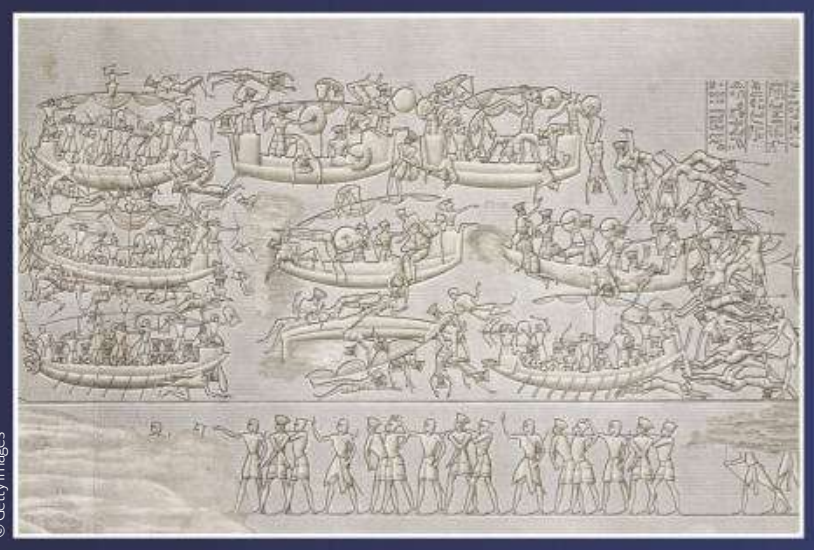
Battle of Qadesh (1275 BCE)

This historic battle was notable for two reasons. First, it was the largest chariot battle in history with around 5,000 chariots clashing between the Egyptians, under Ramesses II, and the Hittites, under Muwatallis. Second, with the battle ending in a stalemate, it was the cause of the first recorded parity peace treaty.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Battle of the Delta (1178 BCE)

In 1178 the mysterious Sea Peoples looked to challenge Egyptian power in the region and took their experienced, heavy navy to challenge the lighter and less experienced Egyptians at sea. However, the larger ships of the Sea People proved ineffective when drawn into the Nile Delta, where the Egyptians decimated their forces.

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Battle of Megiddo (1458 BCE)

The city from which the word armageddon was derived by the Greeks, Megiddo hosted many important conflicts. In 1458 it was the site for a battle between the rebellious kings of Canaan and Syria against Tuthmosis III. The pharaoh outsmarted his enemies in approaching the city and forced their surrender after an eight-month siege.

© Alamy

Battle of Pelusium (525 BCE)

Often cited as one of the earliest examples of psychological warfare, the Achaemenid ruler Cambyses II used animals sacred to the Egyptians to deter them from attacking, with some images depicting his men throwing cats over the city walls. Eventually the Egyptians were routed by the invading army.

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ABOVE Egyptian scribes count hands, severed from the enemy dead in order to tally up the number of kills during battle. From Medinet Habu, Luxor

ABOVE-INSET A pair of feet rest on the 'nine bows', symbols representing all of Egypt's enemies. Carved at the Temple of King Seti I, Abydos

possibility of any future threat. Their weapons were as straightforward as their military organisation and tactics. Archers were armed with simple bows, their arrows tipped with stone or bone arrowheads. Everyone else had axes with stone blades, daggers, or spears. Cowhide shields and leather straps, wrapped around the torso, were the troops' only protection.

There's frustratingly little detail in the early written accounts of Egyptian warfare, which tends to be described in the idealised funerary biographies of courtiers, inscribed in their tombs. These aren't generally found in the early evidence, there are paintings of sieges, which show Egyptians climbing ladders to reach their enemies high on the walls of fortified Levantine cities. Meanwhile, around 2380 BCE, King Sahure had a scene of defeated Libyan enemies, along with their names, carved into a wall at his pyramid complex in Abu Sir, not far from modern Cairo. This might have been regarded as a true event from the king's reign, if not for the fact that other kings included the exact same scene on their own monuments – even with the same

> "CAMPAIGNING, EITHER TO EXTEND OR REGAIN TERRITORY, CLAIM TRIBUTE, OR SHOW POWER, BECAME AN ANNUAL ACTIVITY"

mention the task assigned by the king and the ensuing success, but little more. The content focuses on the courtier's closeness to the king and proof of good service – meant to entice tomb visitors to leave funerary offerings – rather than historical details about military activity. This is the case with the above-mentioned Weni in the Old Kingdom (2584-2117 BCE), who mainly focuses on listing the ranks of people he led and his service as a good commander, before summarising the destruction his army caused.

Early war depictions are equally unhelpful. Though detailed battle scenes

Libyan names. So did Sahure fight this campaign, or did he too copy it from a previous ruler? We may never know.

New Kingdom, New Innovations, New Army

A major shift in Egyptian warfare occurred as a reaction to the Second Intermediate Period (1781-1549 BCE), a phase of political breakdown. When central power collapsed and the country fragmented, an independent kingdom emerged in Egypt's north-east, centred on a town today called Tell el-Daba. During the Middle Kingdom (2066-1781 BCE), immigrants from the Levant had moved to this region, and the Egyptians settled Levantine prisoners of war there too. Over time, these individuals became Egyptianised. Some even gained positions of power in the local government. With the loss of royal control, these individuals formed a new ruling dynasty. Slowly, they expanded their influence across the Delta and then south, until a plague devastated the population – including the rulers at Tell el-Daba. Their vacant position was either filled by another group of Egyptianised people of Levantine

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origin, or by the arrival of new immigrants from the Levant. Whatever the case, they called themselves heka khasut, 'the rulers of foreign lands', a phrase that reaches us today as the word Hyksos.

After bloody campaigns led by three successive kings, the Egyptians succeeded in expelling the Hyksos from the country. This triggered a new phase in Egyptian history: The New Kingdom, a time of wealth and empire that lasted from around 1549 BCE to 1069 BCE. To Egypt's elite, the Hyksos episode highlighted the urgent need for greater control over the regions bordering the country and to modernise their military and its technology. In the Near East, the chariot and the more powerful composite bow had been used for centuries. With the Hyksos gone, the Egyptians swiftly adopted both.

Chariots now became popular among pharaohs and the nobility as symbols of power and prestige, used for hunting and combat, as well as for getting around (elite villas even had entrances wide enough for chariots to enter the grounds). They also made innovations, designing their chariots to be lighter faster than those ridden by their enemies such as the Hittites. During battle, each chariot had one man steering a pair of horses and another shooting arrows, though other weapons, such as axes and daggers, were always close at hand. A third man, armed with a javelin, ran alongside the chariot, fending off any enemies that posed a danger to the horses. And unlike other soldiers, charioteers were protected by leather or bronze scale armour, and bronze helmets.

ABOVE King Tutankhamun rides on his chariot against his enemies, shooting arrows as his horses trample them. From a chest found in Tutankhamun's tomb in the Valley of the Kings, Luxor

As part of this professionalisation drive, the Egyptians broke with the past and created a standing army, though mercenaries and prisoners of war continued to play a major role. The army was now split into four divisions (at least, it was during the reign of Ramesses II), each named after a god: Amun, Re, Ptah and Seth. Each division had 5,000 men, commanded by the great overseer of the division, with various sub-divisions below. Becoming a soldier was now a career option, and provided a way for people of humble backgrounds to be noticed by the highest elite – even the king. If a soldier could read and write, or was willing to learn, a future in the government might be a possibility. Indeed, those who achieved this did quite well for themselves. A soldier named Ahmose Pennekhbet, who fought in the wars against the Hyksos and then in multiple campaigns under successive kings, rose to become a treasurer and royal tutor – an unimaginable career for earlier generations of Egyptians.

The Pharaoh as a War Leader

Using this professional army, the pharaohs expanded their influence south into Nubia, which they violently annexed, and into the Levant. This brought them into contact with powerful Near Eastern empires – in particular the Mitanni of Syria and Anatolia, and after their collapse, the Hittites of Anatolia. Campaigning, either to extend or regain territory, claim tribute, or show power, became an annual activity. And as kings tend to do in these situations, the pharaohs promoted themselves everywhere as great warriors. Of the most famous, Tuthmosis III, proclaimed his victory over a Mitanni coalition at Megiddo, which ended in a seven month-long siege. Ramesses II promoted Amun's favour at Qadesh and Ramesses III defeated the mysterious Sea Peoples on land and sea, and quashed two Libyan incursions.

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"As well as promoting their strength in combat, the New Kingdom pharaohs presented themselves as excellent decision-makers and strategists"

ABOVE-LEFT Many Egyptian soldiers were armed with spears and protected by shields, like these model spearmen from the tomb of Mesehti at Asyut

ABOVE-RIGHT Nubian archers formed an important part of Egypt's armies from the start of ancient Egyptian history

As well as promoting their strength in combat, the New Kingdom pharaohs presented themselves as excellent decision-makers and strategists. During his empire-expanding campaigns in the Levant, Tuthmosis III met with his commanders at a small Levantine town called Yehem to discuss the best road to take to Megiddo. Against their advice, he chose the most dangerous route, marching his troops in single file through the narrow Aruna Pass that led to the city. Naturally, this turned out to be the best strategy and his campaign ended in success. Similarly, Ramesses II was closely involved in all the decisions taken during his march to Qadesh – including the bad ones. He personally spoke to the two Bedouin who led him to believe that the Hittites where nowhere nearby, prompting his Amun Division's rushed march to Qadesh. Later, once he'd interrogated the two Hittite scouts, he had to summon his officers to explain that he'd been misled – though here he blames his administration in the Levant for failing to keep track of the Hittites' movements rather than himself. The royal texts describing these events appear to have been based on administrative documents, so no doubt reflect some level of reality, despite becoming idealised when describing the king on the battlefield.

Indeed, it's hard to say whether New Kingdom pharaohs actually fought on the front line with their troops. In our sources, the king kills all enemies, zapping ▶

Stepping on the Enemy

What were the 'nine bows'?

A common hieroglyph you'll find on depictions of pharaohs, on their tombs and often at the base of statues is something called the 'nine bows'. Typically, they are nine bow shapes shown together and they represented the nine enemies of Egypt. Who these enemies were might change over time and the number nine was used by Egyptian to mean the total of, so it was a phrase meant to mean any and all outside enemies.

Where and how it was used is perhaps more interesting than what it actually meant. Often when you see the nine bows they are seen under the feet of a pharaoh, meaning they were metaphorically crushing the enemies of Egypt under foot. Another great example is a pair of sandals believed to have belonged to Tutankhamun, which are decorated by the nine bows so that he would be treading in his enemies with every step.

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ABOVE Ramesses II fighitng in a battle with his famous lion by his side

BELOW A Hittite copy of the peace treaty established between King Ramesses II of the Egyptians and King Hattusilis of the Hittites. It was discovered at the Hittite capital Hattusa (Boghazkoy)

FIGHT LIKE AN EGYPTIAN

The weapons and tactics that powered the empire

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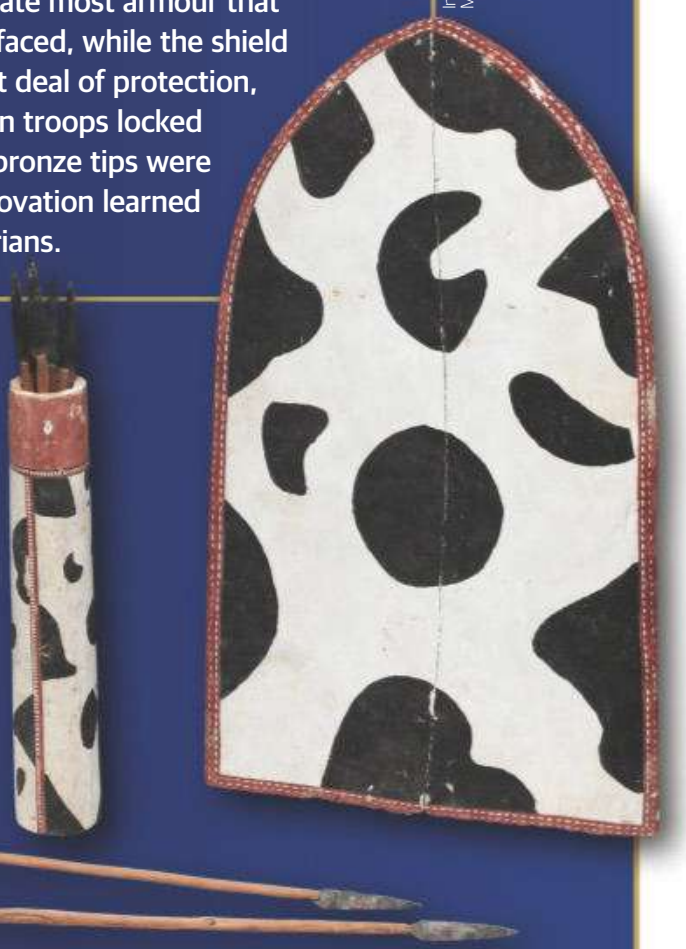
Khopesh

A uniquely shaped sword, the khopesh is a curved sword that resembles a sickle. It's only sharp on its outer edge, meaning it is more of a slashing sword, but could also be used for stabbing and can be safely braced along the back edge. The design actually originated in Mesopotamia.

Spear and Shield

The combination of a spear and a shied on the Egyptian battlefield was very common. The spear would be bronze-tipped, meaning it could penetrate most armour that the Egyptians faced, while the shield allowed a great deal of protection, especially when troops locked together. The bronze tips were actually an innovation learned from the Assyrians.

Image source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Battle Axe

The original Egyptian axe of the Old Kingdom (2700-2200 BCE) was rounder and made of stone or copper before this crescent design made of bronze was adopted in the First Intermediate Period (2181-2055 BCE). This gave the axe a much longer cutting edge, making it much more lethal on the battlefield.

© Getty Images

Composite Bow

At 1.5m long and capable of hitting targets from 250 metres away, the composite bow was made from a number of materials and likely imported to Egypt from Assyria or the Hittite Empire. Bronze-tipped arrows combined with this powerful bow to make Egyptian archers (often positioned in chariots) a fearsome threat on the battlefield.

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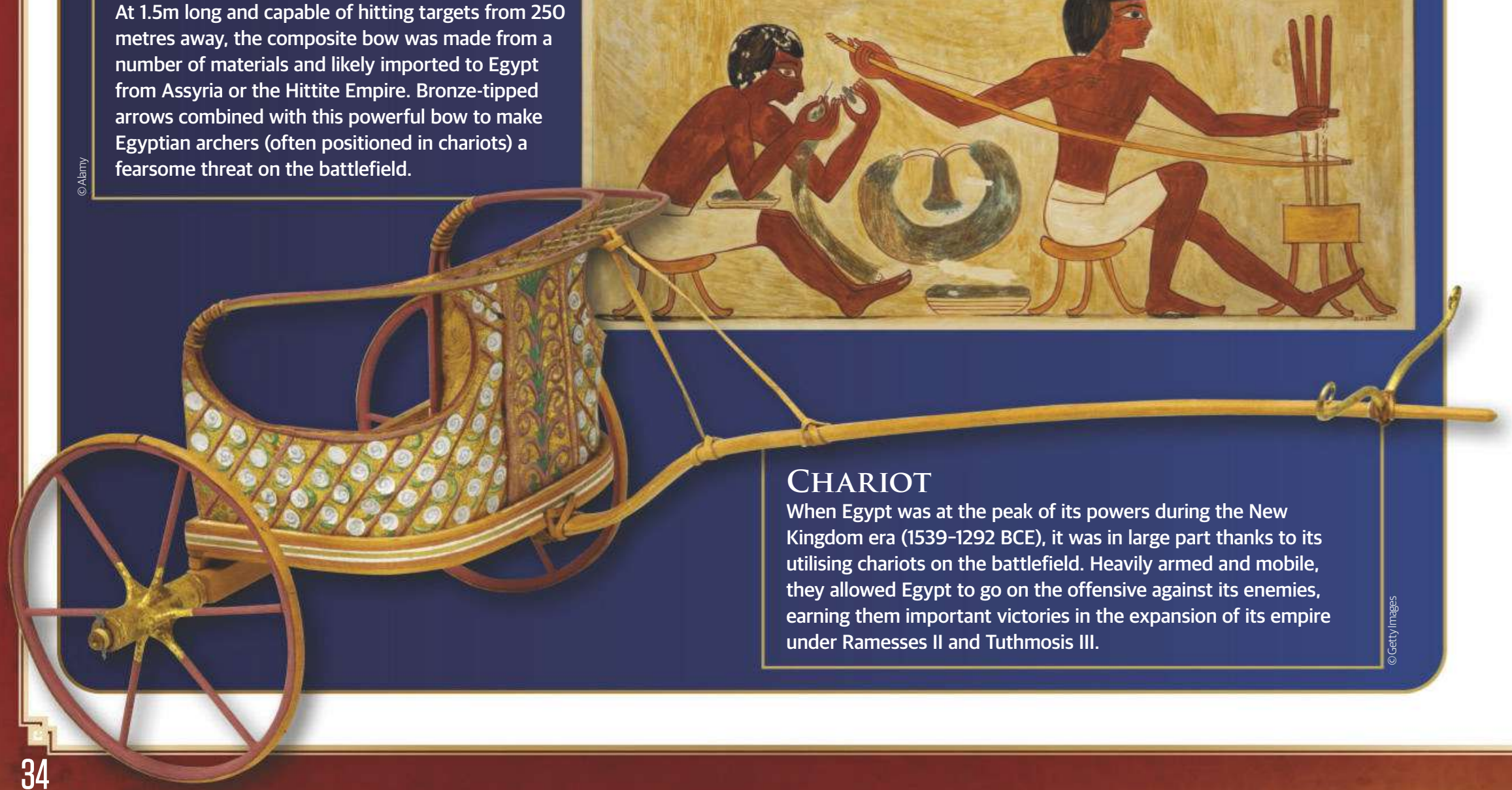
Chariot

When Egypt was at the peak of its powers during the New Kingdom era (1539–1292 BCE), it was in large part thanks to its utilising chariots on the battlefield. Heavily armed and mobile, they allowed Egypt to go on the offensive against its enemies, earning them important victories in the expansion of its empire under Ramesses II and Tuthmosis III.



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LEFT A scene of Prisoners being brought before Ramesses II before having their hands chopped off

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ABOVE Ramesses II slaying and trampling on his enemies in battle

around the battlefield like a shooting star, destroying them in an instant. He is likened to an iron wall, keeping his troops safe. Soldiers never said that they killed enemy fighters; instead, they took prisoners or collected hands from their bodies – a way for Egypt's scribes to tally the number of enemy dead. The New Kingdom royal mummies, meanwhile, bear little evidence that the pharaohs lived lives of danger and combat. There are no healed bones or wounds that could be attributed to them putting themselves in harm's way.

To find a king who died violently on campaign, we need to look a little earlier than the New Kingdom, to Seqenenre Tao II of the Second Intermediate Period.

> "SEQENENRE'S KILLERS HACKED AT HIS FACE WITH AXES AND SMASHED HIS NOSE WITH A MACE OR AXE"

Around 1553 BCE, Seqenenre's killers hacked at his face with axes and smashed his nose with a mace or the haft of an axe. Because all the blows were inflicted against his head, and involved different weapons, it's probable that Seqenenre was killed during a ceremonial execution, rather than fighting on the battlefield. King Senebkay of the Abydos Dynasty – a line of rulers at Abydos during the Second Intermediate Period – was also killed at the hands of enemies. But unlike Seqenenre, the unfortunate Senebkay is riddled with deep wounds, from his head to his feet, perhaps reflecting death during combat against a number of foes. As far as we can tell, no New Kingdom pharaoh bears any such wounds or scars. This doesn't necessarily mean that they didn't fight, just that they weren't perhaps as active on the battlefield as they liked to present themselves.

War and Peace

Just as important as fighting in battle or deciding on a war strategy is knowing when to establish peace – a decision that was also in the pharaohs' hands. Under King Amenhotep II, the Egyptians may have established treaties with the Babylonians, Mitanni and Hittites, as gifts were sent from their kings to the royal court. Afterwards, correspondence between the great kings of the Near East and Egypt is evidenced by the Amarna Letters, discovered at Tell el-Amarna (the ancient royal city of Akhetaten) in Middle Egypt. These present a picture of frequent gift exchange, travelling envoys, diplomatic marriages and an equality between rulers. Relations with the Hittites soured over time, ultimately leading to Ramesses' brush with death at the Battle of Qadesh. But years later, even Ramesses II and the Hittite king Hattusilis decided that the time had come to forge closer relations, ending the years of distrust and fighting between their two empires. Their negotiations resulted in the world's first known parity peace treaty – one between equals.

After the treaty was established, correspondence travelled between the two courts (including two letters containing disagreements about Ramesses' recollection of events at the Battle of Qadesh). Ramesses married two Hittite princesses, and the Hittite crown prince visited Egypt. Ramesses also invited Hattusilis to come to Egypt, though the Hittite king seems not to have accepted the offer. Due to this newfound cooperation, life improved, and people could travel in safety, particularly in the Levant, which was no longer caught up in the wars between two powerful empires. The pharaoh may have officially regarded all foreigners as embodiments of disorder, and warfare may have been key to royal presentation and ideology, but in the end the reality is that cooperation and peace are always the more sensible and prosperous options. Even for a warrior pharaoh like Ramesses II.

The Phantom Major

AND THE FOUNDING OF THE SAS

How a young Scottish officer raised a small commando team that grew into a legendary special forces unit

Written by Gavin Mortimer

Main image and badge: © Alamy
Inset image: © Getty Images

On 10 September 1942 the *Stirling Observer* ran a story about a local lad under the headline "Daring Deeds in the Middle East". The newspaper dubbed David Stirling the 'Phantom Major' and it gave its readers a flavour of his work deep behind German lines in Libya: "A favourite method was to steal in among the enemy, perhaps after journeys of upwards of four hundred miles, and plant delayed action incendiary bombs in aircraft, hangars and transport. After one such exploit he sent all his men away and waited alone for the first explosion. The moment it came he opened the door of the German guard-house. In front of him he saw a startled officer sitting at a desk. Around the walls in bunks were about eighteen Nazi soldiers. Stirling had a grenade in his hand. 'Nein, nein, nein!' said the Nazi, groping for his revolver. 'Yes, yes, yes,' said the British major, and he lobbed the grenade and slammed the door. As he ran into the darkness there was an explosion."

More than one reader must have started as they read the 'Boys' Own' account. Was this the same Stirling they had known before the war? The privileged aristocrat, the indolent loafer, the lounge lizard, as the press called the foppish young men of the 1930s who preferred nightclubs and cinemas to hard work and duty.

The Phantom Major and David Stirling were one and the same, and the story of how Stirling raised a small commando unit that became the Special Air Service is one of the more remarkable of World War II.

Stirling was born into the landed gentry in 1915, the fourth child (and third boy) of Brigadier-general Archibald Stirling and his wife, Margaret, whose father had been an aide-de-camp to Queen Victoria in the 1880s. Stirling was an outsider. He suffered a speech impediment as a toddler that exacerbated his natural shyness and he felt overawed by his extrovert mother and his rumbustious brothers. He was sent away to boarding school when he was eight, a ten-year education that he didn't enjoy. Combined, these childhood experiences moulded his character, transforming him into a young man who was self-sufficient, innovative and determined to prove himself. There was a contradiction at the heart of Stirling: he could on the one hand be lazy and on the other driven. It depended on his level of motivation.

On leaving school Stirling drifted. He dropped out of Cambridge University after three terms and didn't last long as an apprentice architect in Edinburgh. He toured Europe, visiting France and Switzerland, until finally, in November 1938 his exasperated mother packed him off to America to work on the ranch of a family friend.

Stirling was in Montana driving horses towards the ranch in El Paso when he learned in September 1939 that Britain and Germany were once more at war. He returned to Britain and reported for duty at the Scots Guards training battalion at Pirbright in Surrey. He had been there before, briefly in the summers of 1937 and 1938, having joined the supplementary reserve; but that was part-time soldiering in peacetime. Now he was training for war and Stirling soon discovered he lacked the discipline and temperament for the Guards. When he wasn't being surly to his instructors, he was falling asleep in lectures or skipping them for more pleasurable pursuits. One of his contemporaries in the Guards, Carol Mather, recalled: "He was certainly a very idle officer, a lazy fellow. A bit of a gambler, a bit of a drinker... a very amusing companion but we never saw him really in the role of a great leader."

> "HE LOBBED THE GRENADE AND SLAMMED THE DOOR. AS HE RAN INTO THE DARKNESS THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION"

BELOW Paddy Mayne, far right, and David Stirling, second from right, whose complementary talents were responsible for the growth of the SAS

Stirling and Stirling

Bill Stirling was David's elder brother and a guerrilla leader in his own right

Bill Stirling was a man who preferred to remain in the shadows, allowing his younger brother to lay claim to being the founder of the SAS. Yet Bill was in many ways the father of British special forces in WWII. An early recruit to Military Intelligence, **Bill was selected in a six-man sabotage team in** April 1940 for a guerrilla campaign in Norway. The operation was aborted when their submarine hit a mine but the preparation for the mission had revealed to Bill the deficiencies in how Britain trained soldiers for irregular warfare. On his own **initiative he petitioned the War Office to establish** a Commando Special Training Centre, which opened for business in Scotland in June 1940.

Bill was the chief instructor and throughout the rest of the year hundreds of men passed through the school and received a grounding in guerrilla fighting. In January 1941 Bill sailed to North Africa with the Special Operations Executive (SOE), an organisation skilled in clandestine warfare, and in Egypt Bill helped David create the SAS.

In October 1942 Bill was promoted to lieutenant-colonel and appointed to command the Small Scale Raiding Force, an amphibious raiding unit, which in May 1943 became the Second SAS regiment based in Algeria.

Under Bill's leadership, 2AS carried out many daring operations by boat, jeep and parachute in 1943. He was sacked as commanding officer in June 1944 after a fierce disagreement with senior command about the best way to deploy the SAS during the invasion of France. Disenchanted with the army, Bill returned to run the family estate in Scotland and post-war he enjoyed a successful business career.

COUNTERFOIL

NAME STIRLING, W.J.

RANK or OFFICE. Major

DATE. 23.10.42.

Inter-Services Research Bureau

Never actually issued

Signature.

Pass No. 1425

It was his elder brother, Bill (see above), who amicably parted Stirling and the Scots Guards in the summer of 1940, employing him as the adjutant at the commando training school he had established in the north-west of Scotland. Bill then steered his brother towards the newly formed commandos, and in January 1941 Stirling was shipped to North Africa with Number Eight Commando, one of three troops despatched to Egypt in order to attack Italian targets in Libya and the Mediterranean.

The commandos' arrival in North Africa coincided with that of General Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps, sent by Hitler to bolster the crumbling Italian forces in Libya. The balance of the Desert War shifted and opportunities to deploy the commandos dwindled, and in June 1941 they were disbanded.

Stirling had become disenchanted with the commandos long before their demise and, together with a fellow officer, Jock Lewes, had acquired a handful of parachutes. The pair wanted to experiment with this innovation that Germany had incorporated into its military. On 12 June Stirling, Lewes and guardsmen Roy Davies and Mick D'Arcy made their first jump. "The instructions were to dive out as though going into water," recalled D'Arcy. "We hooked ourselves up, circled the aerodrome, and on a signal from the RAF officer, Lt Lewes and Davies dived out. Next time round I dived out, and was surprised to see Lt Stirling pass me in the air. Lt Lewes made a perfect landing, next came Davies a little shaken. Lt Stirling injured his spine and also lost his sight for about an hour."

He was taken to hospital, where he remained for several weeks. His brother, Bill, who was working at Middle East HQ in Cairo, was a frequent visitor and they discussed in depth the idea David had for a small parachute unit which, as he wrote after the war, "was based on the principle of the fullest exploitation of surprise and of making the minimum demands on manpower and equipment... if an aerodrome or transport park was the objective of an operation, then the destruction of 50 aircraft or units of transport was more easily accomplished by a sub-unit of five men than by a force of 200 men".

It was an unorthodox idea, a new form of warfare that fired Stirling's imagination. This was soldiering, in his eyes, not the spit and polish of the Guards. The challenge was how to present the initiative to the high command. Legend has it that Stirling climbed under the barbed-wire fence (some accounts state he climbed over it) that encircled HQ and barged into the office ▶

ABOVE A 1969 French stamp commemorating the landing of SAS commandos in 1944
© Alamy

3x Image courtesy of Gavin Mortimer

LEFT Stirling obtained a fleet of US Willys jeeps in June 1942 and the SAS used them to devastating effect in raiding Nazi airfields

Image courtesy of Gavin Mortimer

"Next time round I dived out, and was surprised to see Lt Stirling pass me in the air"

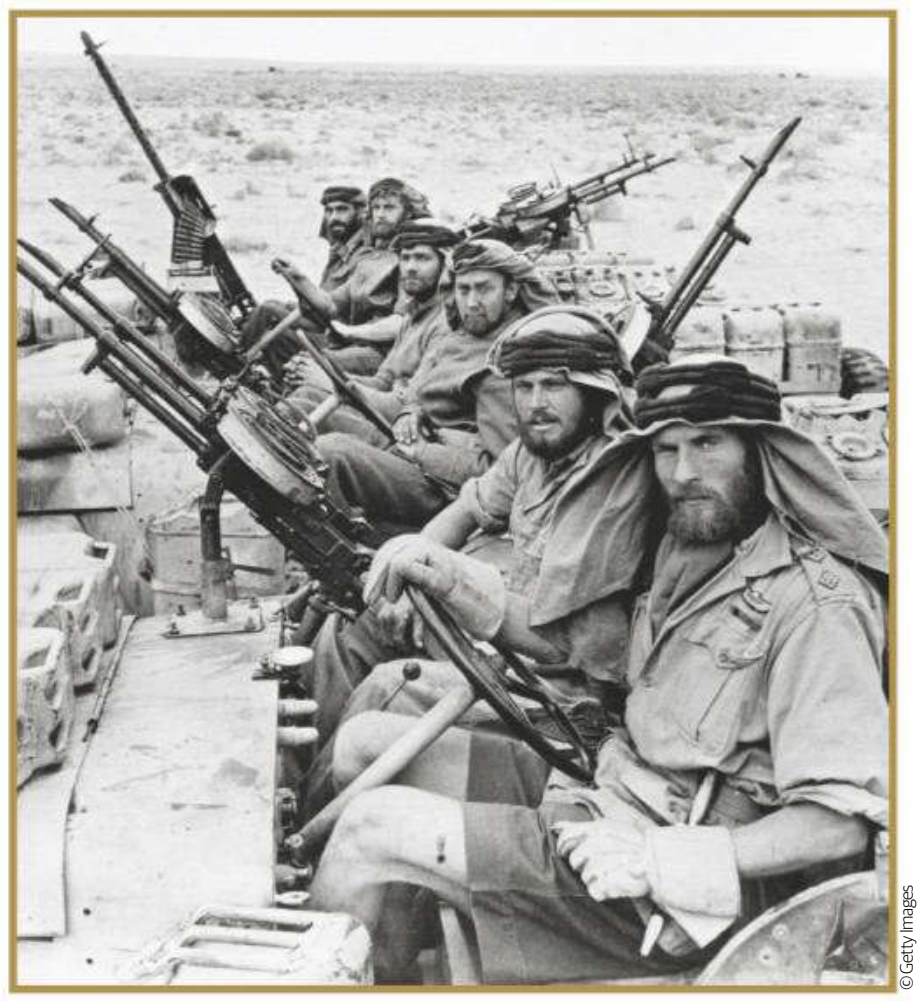
of General Neil Ritchie, deputy chief of the General Staff. The reality is more prosaic; David and Bill summarised their idea on a memo and Bill presented it to his immediate superior, General Arthur Smith, the chief of the General Staff. Within three days David had been promoted to captain and authorised to raise a force of six officers and 60 other ranks. "At the time of the unit's formation, about the end of July 1941, Brigadier Dudley Clarke was responsible for a branch in the Middle East, which dealt among other things with military deception," said Stirling. "One of his objects was to persuade the enemy that there was a fully equipped parachute and glider brigade in the Middle East... to humour him we agreed to name our unit 'L' Detachment, SAS Brigade. Thus was the origin of the name, Special Air Service." Some wag within HQ declared that in fact 'SAS' actually stood for Stirling and Stirling.

David Stirling established the unit's training camp at Kabrit, 144km east of Cairo, and left most of the instruction to Jock Lewes, his second-in-command, while he took care of logistics in the Egyptian capital. The volunteers for the SAS chosen by Stirling were all former commandos and the youngest among them was 19-year-old Johnny Cooper. "Jock instilled into us that the end product of our training was for us to become independent in every way, operating either alone or in very small groups," he later recalled. "We would have to develop an ingrained self-confidence."

A lot of the training was already familiar to the erstwhile commandos but parachute instruction was a new discipline that none of them relished. On their first 'live' jump, two men fell to their deaths because of faulty parachutes. Hours after the tragedy Stirling assembled the men, remembered Cooper, and told them the problem had been identified and rectified. "He also told us that parachute training would recommence the following morning, and that he would be the first to jump."

ABOVE This 'Originals' were among the first chosen by Stirling in the summer of 1941 and include Johnny Cooper, far right.

RIGHT L Detachment Special Air Service pictured in North Africa in 1943



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Capricorn Campaigner

David Stirling moved to Africa after the war and founded a social justice movement

David Stirling emigrated to Rhodesia, modern-day Zimbabwe, after the war and in 1949 he founded the Capricorn Africa Society (CAS). The aim of CAS was to merge the six British Territories of North and South Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika into a "single self-governing Federation under the British Crown wherein all men shall live side by side in concord, sufficiency and freedom". Because of its location between the Equator and the Tropic Capricorn, Stirling called his society 'Capricorn'. The project faced opposition from the start from both the left and the right. White settlers in southern Africa feared CAS would undermine their wealth and influence, while the left suspected Stirling's self-governing Federation was an attempt to maintain the Empire beneath the veneer of greater autonomy for Africa, a view that was articulated by the Socialist newspaper *The Daily Worker*.

Increasingly beset by financial difficulties, CAS failed to win the support among local populations and Stirling admitted defeat in 1958. He returned to Britain and in 1967 launched Watchguard International, the world's first private security company, which recruited former soldiers – some from the SAS – to act in effect as high-end mercenaries in trouble spots such as Libya following the coup led by Colonel Gaddafi in 1969. Stirling was knighted in 1989 for 'Services to the Military' and he died the following year.

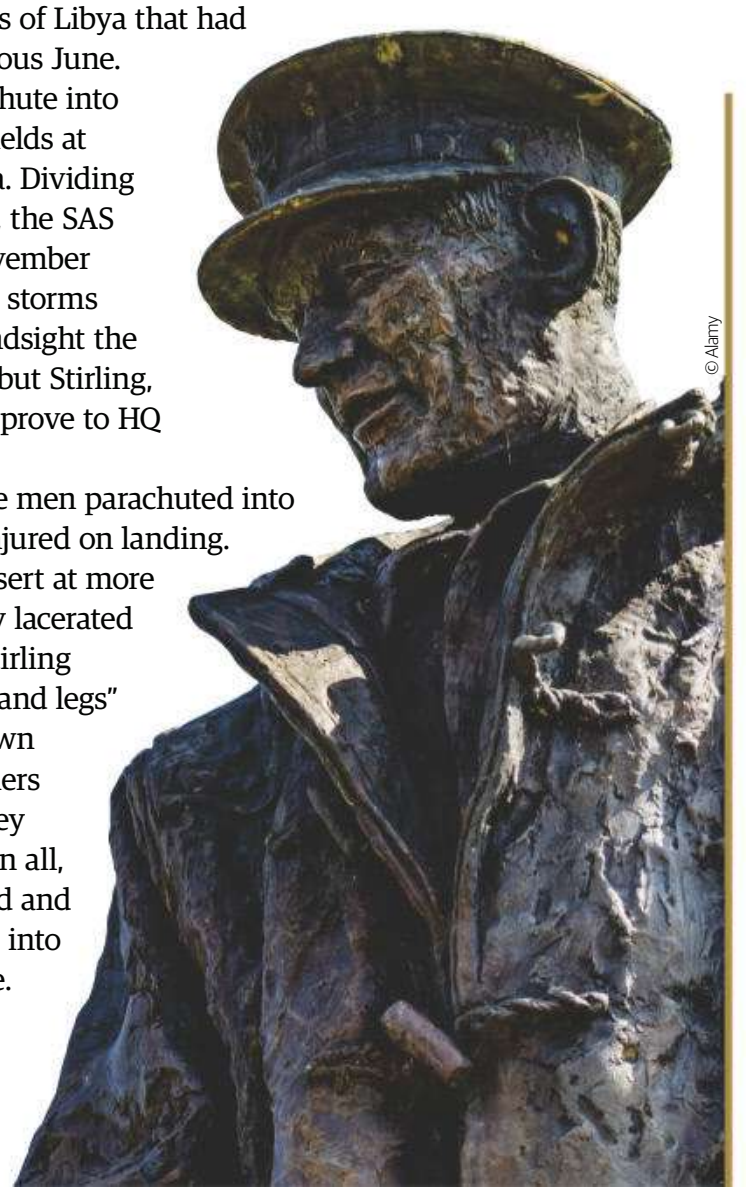
Image source: wiki/Stevan Kragujević

The inaugural SAS operation, codenamed Squatter, was scheduled for the night of 16/17 November. It was timed to coincide with a major British offensive, the aim of which was to retake the eastern coastal regions of Libya that had been lost to the Germans the previous June.

The task of the SAS was to parachute into enemy territory and attack the airfields at Gazala and Tmimi, in eastern Libya. Dividing his 55-strong party into five 'sticks', the SAS took off in the early evening of November 16, and flew into one of the fiercest storms to sweep the region in years. In hindsight the mission should have been aborted but Stirling, ever the gambler, was desperate to prove to HQ what he and his men could do.

The operation was a disaster. The men parachuted into a ferocious wind and many were injured on landing. Cooper was "dragged across the desert at more than 30mph by the wind", his body lacerated by stones and camel thorn bush. Stirling "sustained injuries about the arms and legs" but at least he, like Cooper, was down in one piece. Many weren't and others were captured by the Italians as they wandered aimlessly in the desert. In all, not one enemy plane was destroyed and of the 55 SAS men who parachuted into Libya only 21 returned to their base.

BELOW The David Stirling Memorial near his ancestral home in Scotland



© Alamy

Among those that did were Stirling, Lewes and another of the officers, a Northern Irishman called Blair Mayne. Invariably nicknamed 'Paddy', Mayne was a big man who had played international rugby in the second row before the war. He was a boxing champion, too, a natural athlete with a mind as agile as his body.

He and Stirling had little in common and their relationship could best be described as respectful. Together, however, they complemented one another. Mayne was a natural guerrilla fighter; he relished the thrill and talked of going on raids to find some 'good killing'. Stirling's strength was cerebral. He was always thinking of ways to stay one step ahead of the enemy.

Three weeks after the failure of their first operation, Mayne and five men launched an attack on Tamet airfield, blowing up 24 enemy aircraft, and a fortnight later the Irishman returned and destroyed a further 27 planes. Another SAS raid in December 1941, led by Lt Bill Fraser, accounted for 37 aircraft at Agedabia

On each occasion the SAS raiders were transported to their targets in trucks driven by men of the Long Range Desert Group, a special forces unit established in 1940 that specialised in reconnaissance. For six months the partnership flourished until in June 1942 Stirling acquired a fleet of American jeeps, newly arrived in Egypt, that enabled the SAS to become self-sufficient and facilitated a change in tactics. Now they drove onto airfields in their heavily armoured jeeps, machine guns blazing. In July alone they destroyed 86 enemy aircraft and nearly 50 vehicles. Nearly 30 of those planes went up in flames on a raid at Sidi Haneish. "The engines roared and we drove onto the perfect surface of the airfield," recalled Cooper of the attack. "The blasting began. It was not long before the whole aerodrome was ablaze."

In September 1942 Stirling was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel and the SAS expanded from a detachment to a regiment with a fighting strength of 29 officers and 572 other ranks. Not only had the SAS been transformed but so had its leader; in the Guards he had been nicknamed the 'Giant Sloth' by his peers on account of his inertia. By the end of 1942 he was known as the Phantom Major. But his luck ran out in January 1943 when he was captured in Tunisia by a company of German paratroopers whose task was to hunt down the SAS and the LRDG.

Stirling spent the rest of the war as a prisoner, and he was in the infamous Colditz Castle when he was finally repatriated in April 1945. He returned to Britain to discover that the SAS, which less than four years earlier had been a detachment of six officers and 66 men had grown into a brigade numbering 2,500 soldiers including two French regiments and a squadron of Belgians.

Stirling's first port of call was the family estate in central Scotland, where he was welcomed home by the local newspaper. "Colonel Stirling's desert exploits against the enemy were as daring and brilliant in execution as the adventures of an Ouida hero in modern battle-dress," gushed the *Stirling Observer* in its edition of 26 April. "With a handful of picked men, he carried out a vast campaign of wrecking and destruction far behind Rommel's forward positions, destroying more than 200 enemy aircraft on the ground, burning up scores of transport and killing many Germans and Italians. His exploits form one of the war epics."

Despite its achievements in North Africa and later Europe, the SAS was disbanded in October 1945 by the new government led by Clement Attlee. He believed there would be no need for a force such as the SAS post-war. Events soon proved him wrong as the British Empire began to break up and communist insurgencies - and later terrorism - erupted around the world. The SAS have been involved in many of these conflicts, always adhering to David Stirling's motto of Who Dares Wins.

Behind enemy lines

Crucial to the Allied effort in WWII, various SAS squadrons entered German territory and caused mayhem for the enemy, destroying weapons, supplies and communication and transport lines

Operation Cooney

A French SAS operation that entailed inserting 18 small sabotage teams by parachute, Cooney's aim was to isolate Brittany by cutting its railway lines within 48 hours. The mission began on 8 June 1944 and forced a battlegroup of the German 275th Division heading to the beachhead to abandon the railway and take to the road, arriving 48 hours behind schedule.

Operation Titanic

Commanded by Lieutenants Poole and Fowles, Titanic comprised four men and its mission was to create a diversion just behind the Normandy beaches prior to the arrival of the main invasion fleet. This was done by throwing several sandbags dressed as paratroopers from the aircraft that were fitted with firecrackers to explode on landing. It wasn't a success.

Operation Haft

A reconnaissance mission in July to radio back details of German positions ahead of the breakout from the Cotentin Peninsula.

Operation Dingson

A French SAS mission in Brittany in June, culminating in the Battle of St Marcel, which left six SAS and 300 Germans dead.

> "The operation suffered from the proximity of large numbers of enemy troops and at dawn on 3 July the camp was overrun with the Germans capturing 31 SAS soldiers, all of whom were executed"

Operation Bulbasket

Commanded by Captain John Tonkin, Bulbasket was a 1SAS operation that began on the night of 5/6 June when the men parachuted into the countryside south of Poitiers. From the start, the operation suffered from the proximity of large numbers of enemy troops and at dawn on 3 July the camp was overrun with the Germans who captured 31 SAS soldiers, all of whom were executed.

RIGHT To supply the SAS parties with jeeps required four huge 90-foot parachutes for each vehicle

Image source: wiki/ Imperial War Museums

Map by: Rocio Espin

Operation Gain

About 60 men from D squadron, 1SAS, operated for two months in the Rambouillet area, approximately 50km south of Paris. Though they lost several men, the SAS inflicted much damage on the Germans in a series of hit and run raids, while also derailing two trains, cutting 16 railway lines and providing important intelligence on German troop movements close to the capital.

Operation Rupert

A 2SAS operation that only began in the middle of August when the men parachuted into eastern France with instructions to sabotage railway lines between Nancy and Chalons-sur-Marne. By this time, however, the Germans were withdrawing east with the American Third Army in hot pursuit, so the SAS for a time acted as reconnaissance patrols for their allies.

Operation Hardy

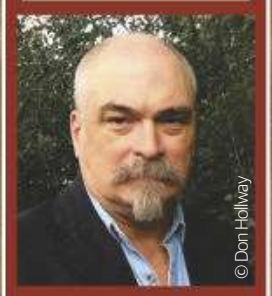
The forerunner to Operation Wallace, Hardy's mission was to lay supplies and provide intelligence for Roy Farran's squadron when they arrived.

Operation Haggard

B Squadron, 1SAS, dropped west of the Loire in early August, establishing a base between the towns of Bourges and Nevers. Ordered to spread "alarm and despondency" among the Germans, they did just that. In one attack on 25 August they ambushed a German convoy with a huge roadside bomb before mopping up the survivors with small-arms fire. An estimated 100 Nazis were killed.

"Ordered to spread 'alarm and despondency' among the Germans, they did just that. In one attack on 25 August they ambushed a German convoy with a huge roadside bomb before mopping up the survivors with small-arms fire"

EXPERT BIO



DON HOLLWAY

A man of many talents, Don Hollway is an author, illustrator, musician and re-enactor. He has written extensively on a number of topics such as aviation history and military history, for titles such as *Aviation History*, *Military Heritage* and *Scientific American*.

Harald Hardrada

THE LAST VIKING

The warrior king is infamous for his defeat at the hands of Harold II, but Don Hollway says there's more to him than just 1066

Interview by Callum McKelvie

On the 25 September 1066 the leader of the viking invasion force, Harald Hardrada, was killed by an arrow to the throat fired by the armies of King Harold II. A mere three weeks later the Battle of Hastings would see the destiny of Britain changed forever, overshadowing the earlier conflict. In doing so, the life and legend of Harald Hardrada would be consigned to a footnote in the history classrooms of the United Kingdom, his successful competitor, William of Normandy, instead becoming the new ruler of Britain. Hardrada's life, however, is not one which should be overlooked because of a single defeat. He was a brutal warrior, with scores of victories and conquests to his name. Don Hollway tells us Hardrada's story and why he considers him to be 'The Last Viking'.

Who was Harald Hardrada?

His full name was Harald Sigurdsson, or in Old Norse Sigurdarson. In later years he was nicknamed Hardrada, 'Hard Ruler', but nobody dared to call him that to his face. He was a real-life fantasy hero who travelled and fought all over the medieval world, from Scandinavia to Russia, Byzantium and the Holy Lands, before making himself King of Norway. He launched the last great Viking invasion of England.

Why do you refer to Harald as 'The Last Viking?'

Historians generally regard Harald's death in 1066 as the end of the Viking Age. In those days the Norsemen, who for centuries had been such great explorers and conquerors, had been reduced to squabbling among themselves. The North Sea Empire of Cnut the Great had fallen to pieces. England and Scandinavia had gone their own ways. As King of Norway, Harald conducted a bloody 15-year war against Denmark, which he considered a rebel province, before invading England. He really was the last of the great Vikings.

How did he become King of Norway?

When Harald was 15 his elder half-brother King Olaf was killed at the Battle of Stiklestad in 1030. Harald was badly wounded, but escaped and went to Kiev in Russia, serving its king, Yaroslav the Wise. He even aspired to marry Yaroslav's daughter Elisaveta. His ultminate goal, though, was to return to Norway and reclaim his brother's crown. To do that, he needed money and manpower, but in Kiev he would never be anything more than a glorified bodyguard. So he became a soldier of

fortune, selling his sword to the highest bidder. After years of warfare, conquest and looting he returned as the richest man in Northern Europe, with an army at his back. By that time his kinsman, Olaf's son Magnus, was on the Norwegian throne. Harald basically offered to buy half the kingdom or go to war, winner take all. Magnus wisely decided to share. It wasn't until Magnus died a few years later that Harald really fought to re-establish Cnut's North Sea Empire, against the Danes and later against his own people and the English.

Tell us about his life as a mercenary...
When still a young man, Harald journeyed from Kiev down to Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire. At the time, it was the new Rome, one of the world's greatest cities and certainly the greatest in Christendom. Yet it was continually at war, with the Saracens in Sicily and the Holy Land, and always contending with usurpers and rebels. There was plenty of work for a mercenary. Harald enlisted in the Varangian Guard, an elite warrior unit composed of Viking exiles. He served as an imperial escort on one of the first Byzantine diplomatic missions to Jerusalem and the Holy Land. There he fought off Arab bandits and even bathed in the River Jordan, though he was religious only to the extent that it served his personal goals.

Harald effectively became commander of the Varangians, bodyguard to the Empress Zoe. In fact, they became lovers. It was even rumored that she might make Harald himself the next Byzantine emperor. Zoe was already suspected of killing two husbands to put her favorites on the throne. She was much older than Harald, however, and when he found a new, younger flame she turned spiteful. Harald barely got away with his life.

ABOVE Depiction of the Battle of Stiklestad, showing the death of Harald's half-brother, King Olaf

BELOW Zoë Porphyrogenita, Byzantine empress, with whom Harald had an affair

BOTTOM An artist's impression of the Battle of Stamford Bridge where Harald was killed

3x © Alamy

What were some of Harald's most memorable conquests and battles?
Wow, it's hard to choose! He spent his whole life fighting. Muslims, Christians, pagans, other Vikings, even other Varangians. The Battle of Stiklestad in 1030 was notable for being partly fought in darkness, under a total eclipse of the sun. You can imagine how people of that time would have taken this as an omen. The pagan warriors, seeing the ring of fire in the sky, would naturally have thought of one-eyed Odin looking down on them. The Christians, since the battle was almost exactly 1,000 years after the crucifixion of Christ, would have recalled how the sky was said to have darkened on that day. Everyone involved would have believed they were in a fight of ultimate good versus evil, the final battle at the end of time – for the Christians, Armageddon, and for the pagans, Ragnarok. Then Harald's brother King Olaf was killed and his kingdom – Harald's kingdom – fell to Cnut's son Svein, a terrible ruler. So men on either side could have claimed that the prophecy played out.

Harald was also involved in several sea battles. One of his first was in Byzantine service, against the Saracens in the so-called Battle of the Cyclades in the southern Aegean. Not much is known about this fight, though it was important and decisive. It's mentioned only briefly in Byzantine accounts, and the Norse sagas only say that Harald fought against pirates, which is how the Byzantines

thought of Saracen raiders. Knowing the outcome, and by heavily researching the ships and naval tactics of the day, I was able to recreate the battle. Navies still used galleys, but not the triremes of Roman times, and they didn't ram each other. The ships were now so solidly built that the ram was obsolete. The idea was to peel the oars off each other, grapple and board. And of course the Byzantines had what was called Greek Fire, medieval napalm. Harald had never before experienced anything like that.

Late in his career, Harald led the Norwegians against the Danes in the Battle of the Nisa, off what is now the Swedish coast. Viking sea battles were totally different from the Roman or Byzantine. The idea there was not to sink or burn ships, which were extremely valuable, but simply to kill or chase off their crews. The Norse lashed their fleets together and basically fought a land battle at sea. In contrast to their fights on land, which were quick hit-and-run surprise raids, their sea battles were long, drawn-out, bloody affairs. The Battle of the Nisa went on all night – though that far north in summertime, the sun only goes down for a few hours – and although Harald's ships were outnumbered two-to-one, he managed to achieve victory.

When researching your book, what were some of the most interesting things you discovered?

I mentioned that Harald offended Empress Zoe by taking up with a younger woman. This Maria was also the mistress of the Byzantine emperor Constantine IX, Zoe's husband and Harald's overlord. As you can imagine, the four of them had a somewhat complex relationship so they had to be very discreet in carrying on their affair. Harald was once almost caught in Maria's boudoir and only escaped by diving out the window. At the same time, the beginnings of medieval chivalric romance – knights serving their lady loves, secret unrequited passion and all that – came out of the East right about this time. Harald, by now a polished courtier, may have been one of its earliest practitioners. He had a very different relationship with Maria than he had with Zoe. They didn't end up together, but when he eventually married Elisaveta of Kiev, he named their youngest daughter after his lost love, Maria.

Harald, like many Vikings, was a fan of poetry. He supported some of the most famous Norse poets in his court and was a bit of a poet himself. A number of his verses have survived, and I made the most of them. It let me get inside his head a bit. Harald didn't shirk from fighting and was often boastful of his prowess in war, but he could also be petulant and sulky at times, vengeful and tyrannical too. He really earned that nickname, 'Hard Ruler'. In the book I show all sides of him, good and bad.

One unexpected thing was that he had a really smutty sense of humour. Not too surprising in a Viking, I suppose, but his later biographers totally leave that out of his story. Too shocking for Victorian readers, I suppose, maybe even some modern ones. When you go back to the original sagas, though, the Norse chroniclers kind of revelled in it. It's part of who Harald was, and as his biographer I felt it essential to show that side of him as well. He was a Viking after all, a robber and a killer. Off-colour humour was the least of his sins.

"Harald Hardrada died the way a Viking was supposed to – in battle, laughing, sword in hand"

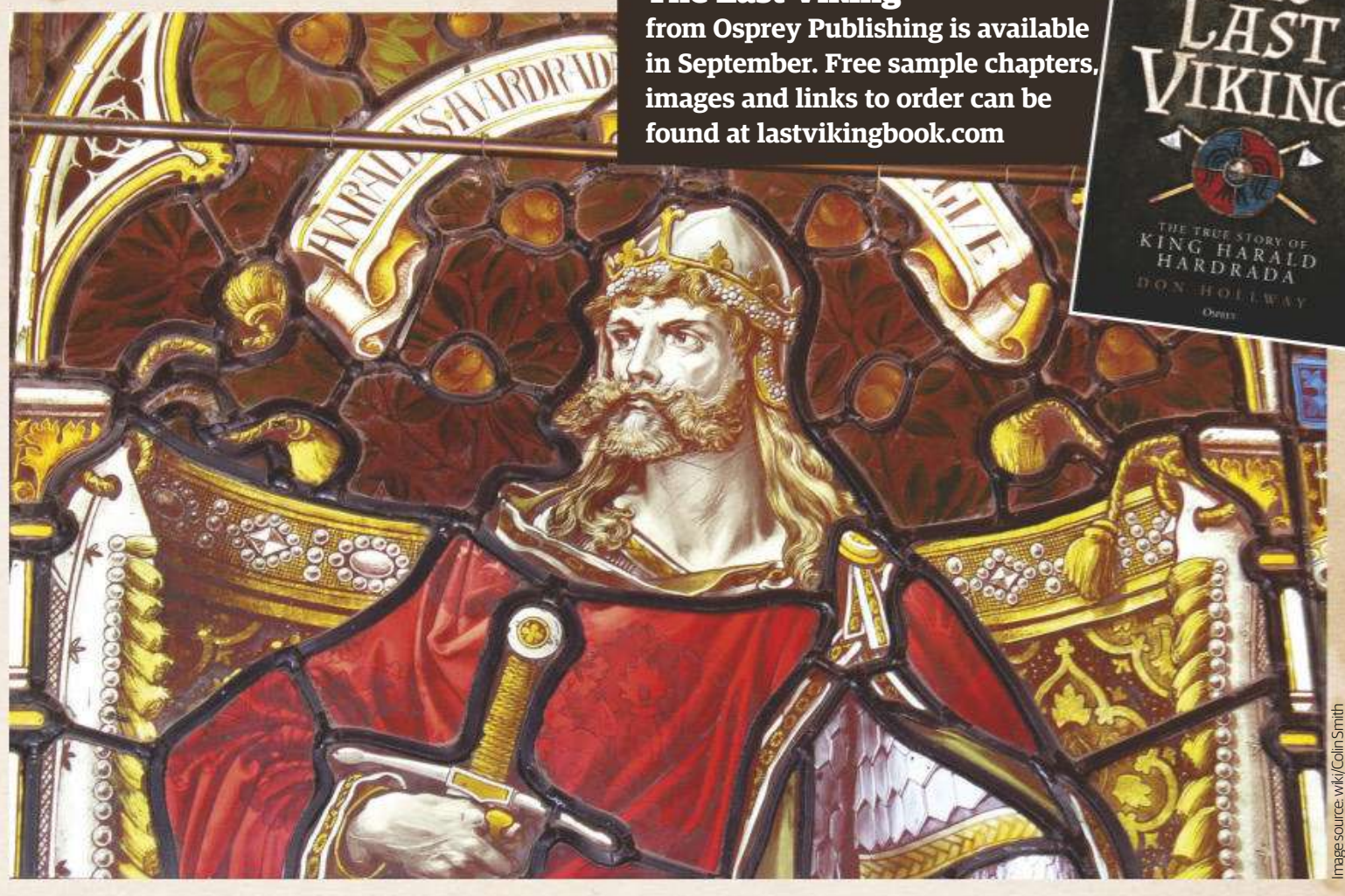


Image source: wiki/ColinSmith

ABOVE
Harald Hardrada as portrayed in a stained glass window in Kirkwall Cathedral

How did Harald Hardrada die?

Do we need a spoiler alert here? I suppose it's no secret that he died, what's important is how he died. Having failed to conquer Denmark, Harald was coaxed into invading England by Tostig Godwinson, the brother of King Harold II, England's final Anglo-Saxon king. This was the last great Viking invasion, actually one of the largest. The Norwegians laid waste much of England's North Sea coast, defeated the Northumbrians in battle and forced York to surrender. To answer the Norwegian King Harald, the English King Harold, was forced to march all the way up from the south, where he'd spent the summer guarding against an invasion by Duke William of Normandy. Of course, after the Battle of Stamford Bridge, where the Anglo-Saxons surprised and defeated the Norwegians, the Normans invaded anyway, and then they had to force-march all the way back down, which many historians think is one of the reasons they were themselves defeated at Hastings that October of 1066. If not for Harald Hardrada, English history might have turned out very differently.

What matters to our story is that Harald Hardrada died the way a Viking was supposed to, the way we think of Vikings dying – in battle, laughing, sword in hand. I remember first reading about him as a boy and thinking, wow, what a life that guy led! All these years later, I'm happy and proud to retell it in *The Last Viking*. Harald was a Viking's Viking.

The Last Viking
from Osprey Publishing is available in September. Free sample chapters, images and links to order can be found at lastvikingbook.com

"The story pulls you in, and doesn't let go."
STEPHEN HARDING
THE LAST VIKING
THE TRUE STORY OF KING HARALD HARDRADA
DON HOLLWAY
Osprey

#HiSTory* Of SwearING!!

From the classics ‘f*ck’ and ‘sh*t’ to some more obscure gems like ‘wagtail’ and ‘mutton shunter’, people have always loved to curse

Written by Hareth Al Bustani

In 1972 the legendary comedian George Carlin listed “Seven Words You Can Never Say on Television”, but if television had been around centuries ago the list would have been far longer. Insults and obscenities are as old as language itself; in some cases, perhaps older. While today’s swear words often seem rather abstract in construction, many of them descend from social conditions in which they would have been considered downright scandalous. In puritanical societies, some would have been outright blasphemous or even cause for murder. Though a few have faded into obscurity, others such as the timeless ‘ars*hole’ have stood the test of time.

People have been merrily cursing for hundreds of years

All images: © Getty Images

gadzooks

Taking the Lord's name in vain

Although it sounds like something Fred Flintstone would yell after dropping a bowling ball on his foot, 'Gadzooks' was one of the Renaissance's worst swear words. A contraction of 'By God's hooks', or more literally, 'By the nails in Christ's cross', Gadzooks was an 'oath' – an offensive or emphatic word or expression uttered in anger or shock.

In 1606, Parliament passed a law making it illegal to "jestingly or profanely" use God's name on stage, and the word largely disappeared thereafter. Another casualty of this overreach was 'zounds' or 'By God's wounds'. Shakespeare began to swap out the word 'God' for 'Heaven' in his later works, such as *Othello*.

arsehole

A wholly English obscenity

In 1388 the author William Langland wrote about a clergyman hunting with "an hepe of houndes at his ers", and Chaucer depicted a man kissing a lady's "naked ers". Yet the word was pedestrian enough to be used in a medical text, which described hemorrhoids as five veins "whyche streche out atte the ars*".

However, by the late 18th century it was considered obscene – so much so that writers began swapping out the word 'ass' for 'donkey' because it was too close for comfort. This association led to some particularly rude compounds, such as 'stupid ars*' and 'dumbass', though none were as offensive as the Old English 'arcehoole', or 'kiss my ars*'. But during World War I, after years on the sidelines, 'ars*' re-entered the popular lexicon.

sh^t

Screaming bloody merda

Simply put, there are few things as physically repulsive as sh*t. The Romans had numerous obscene terms for it, including 'caco' – 'to sh*t' – and the noun 'merda'. As the poet Martial so eloquently described a dessert passed around at dinner: "No one could touch it, it was sh*t." Like 'bollock' and 'fart', the English word 'sh*t' is another proud Anglo-Saxon hand-me-down. In 1509, John Stanbridge proclaimed, "I am weary of study. I am weary of my life... I am almost besh*tten." Curiously, Warwickshire had a Sh*twell Way and 13th-century Lincolnshire even boasted a Randall Sh*tboast, while Canterbury had a Thomas Turd.

b&rk

Cuss like a Cockney

Whether it's words like 'zounderkite', 'vazey' or 'flapdoople', there's always been many ways to call someone a fool. However, these pale in comparison to the heavy hitter, 'berk'. The word emerged from early 20th-century Cockney rhyming slang, a secret jargon used by vendors and criminals.

While some were as innocent as 'I'm going up the apples', as in 'apples and pears', for 'I'm going upstairs', 'berk' was a shortened version of Berkshire Hunt, a foxhunting association. When someone said, 'Don't be such a berk,' it didn't take too much imagination to figure out what this insulting rhyme alluded to.

c@ck

This swear word rules the roost

While many original swear words were those that blasphemed higher powers, the lower human bodily functions could evoke equal outrage. One of the more curious phallic metaphors was that of the 'c*ck'. Roosters have long served as symbols of masculinity, virility and dominance, though it's not clear when man first correlated the cockerel to the penis.

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Shakespeare's Katherine proclaims, "Your c*ck is not for me. It has no fighting spirit." Curiously, the Bard also pioneered the witty use of 'prick': "He that sweetest rose will find, must find love's prick" – a word that was offensive enough to 19th-century sensibilities to be censored to "thorn".

Mutton shunter

Keep it moving!

While some today dismiss police as 'pigs', back in Victorian London they had a rather more creative term for them: 'mutton shunters'. This dates back to one the bobbies' more tedious responsibilities of chasing off prostitutes. In the 19th century the capital was home to tens of thousands of sex workers – whether they operated out of the West End and prosperous suburbs or the grimy dockyards, it was a difficult trade made all the more unbearable by endless police harassment. The term 'mutton' was slang for an older woman who dressed up in inappropriate attire to make themselves look younger. To 'shunt', meanwhile, meant to move or push something. Hence the accursed police were naturally 'mutton shunters'.

Bastard

Son of a b*tch

The word 'bastard' derives from Old French, 'fils de bast' – roughly 'child born in a barn' – used to describe the illegitimate love child of a noble, born out of wedlock.

Although some were able to overcome it, there was significant religious and social stigma around being conceived out of wedlock. In John Ford's 1633 play *Tis Pity She's a Whore*, the word was used to devastating effect: "Thy corrupted bastard-bearing womb." Even two centuries later it was used more broadly as a general insult, such as when Charles Lamb described a sick child who kept him awake as a "little bastard". However, the term took on an ironic twist in the trenches of World War I, becoming a term of endearment.

Bugger

Puritanism at its finest

The Middle English word 'bougre', or 'heretic', originated from Medieval Latin 'Bulgarus', a reference to Bulgaria's association with the heretical Bogomil Gnostics, whom the Catholic Church smeared with accusations of sodomy.

To a prudish and puritanical Protestant Britain, when used literally, such as Randall Cotgrave's 1611 description of a relationship between a girl and a greyhound, the word was considered incredibly explicit. However, before long writers began using it more metaphorically, such as a defiant 1647 quote, "God damn him, blood and wounds, he would bugger his soul to Hell" and 1860's proclamation, "Take the bugger off, he is knifing me!" The word continued to soften, and eventually even women could be called 'buggers'. Not quite gender equality, but something.

b*tch

A millennium of b*tches

Although the insult 'dog' dates all the way back to Ancient Greece, in the 15th century 'b*tch' began to emerge as a derogatory insult aimed at women; specifically, those deemed to be sexually promiscuous.

One notable example was the Chester Mystery Plays, where one character asked, "Whom calleste thou queine, skabde biche?" Intertwined with the implied lewdness, it was an insinuation of sexual dominance and power.

Post-feminism, some women have tried to 'reclaim' the word as a celebration, rather than denigration, of female empowerment; subverting the power of patriarchal language. Although no longer considered a swear word, and used against people of all genders, it still implies inherent misogyny.

© Alamy

Go to hell

The original 'curses' were quite literally curses

Salty Romans scratched 'binding spells' into pieces of metal, folded them up, pierced them and hurled them into tombs to implore the gods of the underworld to 'bind' the various body parts of a rival or scorned lover.

While an Elizabethan Englishman might wish 'a pox on thee', an Irishman would go a step further, yelling, 'to Hell with you'. Though it may seem like eternal damnation was the worst thing one could wish on another, there were other deep-cuts to be had.

A wrathful wretch might curse another's most prized possessions, or their means of livelihood. Other times, as in the case of the Earl of Rochester's 1673 poem, they might just burn a mistress with, "May stinking vapours choke your womb."

your mum

Mum jokes have always been a thing

In Elizabethan England insults often revolved around uncleanliness and social inferiority. When applied to prominent social figures, these could constitute some serious burns. In 1586, a Salisbury woman ended up in hot water after calling the wife of a former mayor, "Mistress Stinks, Mistress Fart... Mistress Tosspot and Mistress Drunkensoul."

She was lucky she only insulted his wife. While one might just about get away with calling a man a cuckold, tarring his mother as a sexual deviant was another matter entirely. If one was looking to ignite a duel, all they had to do was call someone a 'whoreson'. For added sting, they might even drop in the word 'bawdy', derived from 'bawd', a person who used to procure prostitutes.

BLOODY

An inexplicably offensive adjective

Until recently the word 'bloody' was considered unprintable because many wrongly assumed it originated as an oath, shortening 'By Our Lady', a reference to the Virgin Mary, or a reference to the blood of Christ. It may have simply been a reference to the grotesque habits of wealthy 17th-century socialites, or 'bloods' – 'bloody drunk' being 'as drunk as a blood'.

While Miss Edgeworth got away with writing "bloody" in the 1801 children's novel, *Belinda*, soon after the word was censored. Even in 1914, when Eliza Doolittle proclaimed, "Walk! Not bloody likely! I am going in a taxi!" in George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion*, the decency leagues were up in arms.

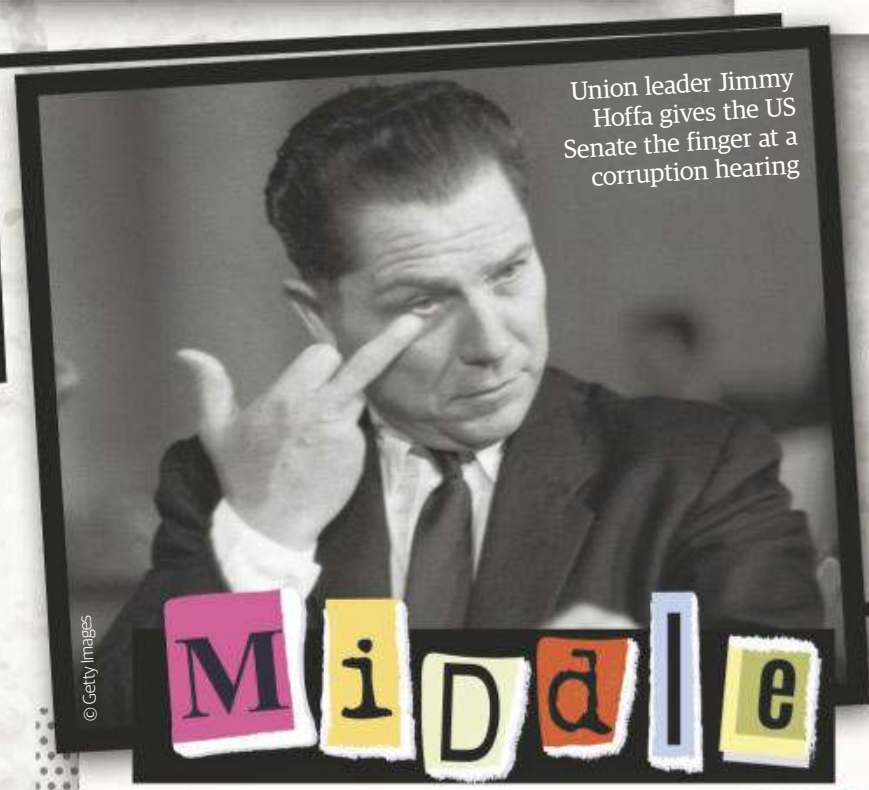
Wagtail

The language of medieval sexism

In the patriarchy of medieval society women were often reduced to two opposing contrasts: the moral ideal versus the moral degenerate. This idea stemmed from religious literature, whereby the pious Virgin Mary contrasted with the corrupting temptress Eve.

Curiously, in medieval England words such as 'witch', 'shrew' and 'scold', which began as ways to demean men, eventually became used to stereotype 'difficult' or 'aggressive' women who were supposed to be obedient.

This male-driven dichotomy of language surrounding women praised those of virtue as 'virgins', 'maidens' and 'angels', compared to 'b*tches' and 'whores'. The negative personification of sensual women resulted in a laundry list of derogatory terms, ranging from 'harlots' to 'wagtails'.



Union leader Jimmy Hoffa gives the US Senate the finger at a corruption hearing

© Getty Images

Middle finger

Step aside, Eminem

One of the oldest gestures in the book, the Romans called it 'digitus impudicus', the 'shameless finger'. Quite simply, the finger was cleverly designed to mimic the appearance of the male genitalia which was, of course, a very rude thing to flash at another person.

The insult goes back even further, to the legendary 4th century Greek philosopher Diogenes, dubbed the first cynic. Notorious for trolling his fellow philosophers, on one occasion while he was at the inn a group of admirers begged Diogenes to introduce them to a famous rhetorician who was passing through. Without missing a beat, the philosopher raised his middle finger to them and proclaimed, "There goes the demagogue of Athens."

f*ck

The monks who f*ccant

In Rome the term 'futuo', or 'f*ck', wasn't always a bad thing – 'One who f*cks' was proudly scribbled on many a brothel wall. The worst insult a Roman man could dish out to another was not so much the word 'f*ck', but to threaten them with sexual assault or accuse them of being sexually submissive to women.

One of the earliest English references to 'f*ck' may have been the registry entry for a proud 14th-century Chester lad named Roger F*ckbythenavel. However, the first time it was applied to literature may have been a 1475 poem damning monks who 'f*ccant' women around the monastery. While Shakespeare never used primary obscenities, his contemporary Ben Jonson employed the graceful term 'windf*cker'.

Rage Against The Machine's song *Killing In The Name* makes epic use of the 'f word'

© Getty Images

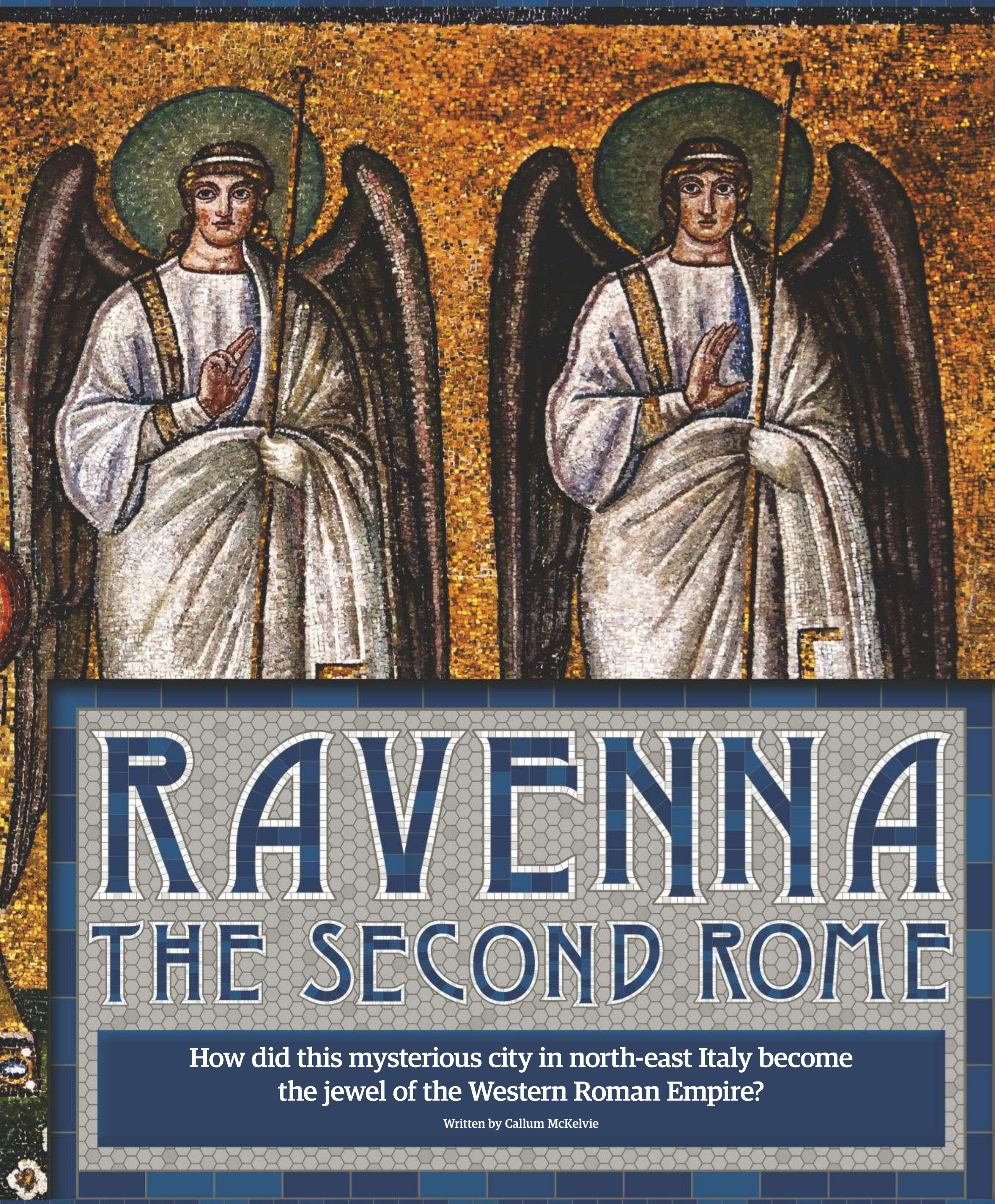
EXPERT BIO

© Adrian Arbib

JUDITH HERRIN

Judith Herrin is Professor Emerita and Constantine Leventis Senior Research Fellow attached to the Classics Department at King's College London. She was educated at the universities of Cambridge and Birmingham, and received additional training in Paris, Munich and Athens. In 2011 she was made a Corresponding Fellow of the Centre for Byzantine Research at the Aristotle University of Thessalonike and in 2016 won the Heineken Prize for History.

Main image: © Alamy



RAVENNA
THE SECOND ROME

How did this mysterious city in north-east Italy become the jewel of the Western Roman Empire?

Written by Callum McKelvie

The epicentre of great battles, the home of emperors and kings – the city of Ravenna was the beating heart of the Western Roman Empire under the rule of Theodoric the Great and an important centre of the Byzantine Empire. Today, its picturesque mosaics and famous basilicas have made the city a haven for tourists rather than royalty. Situated in the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy, on the northeastern coast and with eight UNESCO world heritage sites, its rich history dates back to the time of Julius Caesar and beyond.

In 402 CE, as Milan was besieged, it was selected by Emperor Honorius as the new capital of the Western Roman Empire, and a little over a century later would become a jewel in the crown of the Byzantine Empire. Very little is known about Ravenna's origins and it seems they were a mystery even to the Greeks and Romans, but thankfully we have historian Judith Herrin, the author of *Ravenna: Capital of Empire, Crucible of Europe* to guide us through. She has done extensive research into this unique ancient city, with her book recently earning a nomination for the Wolfson History Prize, and her connection to it dates back to her younger years. "I was a rather grumpy teenager and was not very impressed, but I do remember that it had beautiful mosaics," she recalls of her first visit. Thankfully her fascination with Ravenna grew and her interest in the city's past developed: "I did realise, going back later, that there was something unexplained about some of these mosaics. Why were the emperor Justantine and empress Theodora, who barely left Constantinople, being commemorated in Ravenna? There aren't any portraits of Justinian or Theodora in Rome, and there aren't any that survived in Constantinople. That got me interested in the city, and then I began to realise what a significant role it played in the development of the West." The role of the city in Justinian's empire cannot be understated, but Ravenna's history begins far earlier and is rich with colourful characters and vibrant culture.

ABOVE A mosaic showing the palace of Theodoric

RIGHT The Emperor Honorius, who came to the throne age eight and whose decision it was to move to Ravenna

From around 1400 BCE the city was occupied first by the Etruscians and then the Gauls, but stories of a settlement in the area date back even further. Ancient historians Strabo, Ptolemy and Pliny the Elder all gave differing accounts of who founded the city. Each attribute it to the Thessalians, Umbrians and Sabines, with Pliny even describing it as having been a "town of the Celtic Boil". However, it is certain that the Roman occupation of the region dates back to the third century BCE. "We know that it was a Roman city, typical of most Roman settlements in that it was laid out on a square plan," Herrin explains. "And it had basic facilities, temples, a city council and all the normal things that Roman cities had." One of the best surviving accounts of this early period in Ravenna's history comes from the Greek geographer Strabo, who would visit the city and describe it vividly. "Situated in the marshes is the great [city of] Ravenna," he recorded, "built entirely on piles, and traversed by canals, which you cross by bridges or ferry-boats." However, Ravenna was soon to be set apart from other Roman settlements and become an important strategic location. "The key thing about this city was that it was right on the coast," Herrin explains. "Julius Caesar decided to build a large harbour, which was constructed by digging out a lagoon and establishing a bay, where 250 ships could be sheltered. He made this the base for the Romans' Eastern Mediterranean Navy." As well as having numerous ships and the chief of the navy located there, Ravenna also became something of a centre for business and trade. "A lot of industries that were connected with the navy shipbuilding – sailmaking, anchors, rope makers etc – were based there," Herrin continues. "They had houses in Ravenna and they spent their money there and so because of the naval connection it became quite a busy city."

It was much later, in 402 CE, that this important harbour city would find itself chosen as the new capital of the Roman Empire. "The Roman Emperor Honorius, who ruled from Milan, had inherited the position as a young boy and was very much under the influence of his general

RAVENNA TIMELINE

Important moments in the early years of the ancient city

C. 1400 BCE

Ravenna occupied by the Etruscans and Gauls

The Etruscans and Gauls both occupy the settlement. Various ancient historians state that a settlement in the area was founded much earlier and attributed to numerous peoples including the Thessalians, Umbrians and Sabines.

89 BCE

Ravenna accepted into the Roman Republic

Seeing the potential of the city as a useful harbour defence and port town, Ravenna is made a federated town and accepted into the republic.

49 BCE

Caesar gathers forces before crossing the Rubicon

It is in Ravenna that Julius Caesar gathers his army before crossing the River Rubicon. This act is a deliberate breaking of the law that limits his Imperium (a citizen's authority to hold military and political power). It leads to civil war.

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Image source: wiki/Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, USA

commander, Flavius Stilicho," says Herrin. "When in the early fifth century the Goths threatened to invade, the emperor felt that the city walls were so large they couldn't possibly defend the land, and therefore they needed to look for a safer place." With the capital of Milan about to be abandoned to the Goths, Ravenna was chosen as the new centre of Honorius's Western Roman Empire. "It was viewed as safe, partly because it was well fortified and it had this very important port attached to it," says Herrin. "It was situated in the river delta, in a very marshy swampy land, which made it difficult for any enemy armies to attack." His decision made, the emperor travelled (most likely by river) from Milan with his entire court toward Ravenna. Upon arrival, Honorius immediately began a large number of constructions to house his troops, court and provide all the luxuries befitting a young emperor.

VERY LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT RAVENNAS ORIGINS AND IT SEEMS THEY WERE A MYSTERY EVEN TO THE GREEKS AND ROMANS

Soon, the monuments and impressive buildings would be what Ravenna would become known for and many remain popular tourist attractions today. Not all of these imposing structures arrived with the new emperor, however. "From what we understand, there were monuments in the city that had been decorated by local artists for centuries," Herrin says. "There are the most beautiful sarcophagus, these huge stone tombs in which people were buried, and exquisite carved tombstones. The city walls as well were all built pre-Honorius and were constructed of local brick and filled with rubble, resulting in a formidable defence." However, upon Honorius's arrival, a huge expansion took place in order to transform the established harbour settlement into the 'new Rome'. "As soon as the news of the Imperial Court arriving came to the city, a large cohort of people were ready to build and decorate the buildings with marble inlaid floors and mosaics," says Herrin. "Honorius probably brought with him from Milan a large number of craftsmen who followed the imperial court, because that's where the money was. Honorius set about commissioning all the new things that he wished for, presumably a very substantial palace for himself, possibly accommodation for all his senior courtiers and barracks for all the soldiers." The expansion initiated by Honorius was vast and new bridges across the many rivers, as well as new fortifications around the harbour at Classis, were most likely built during this period. Perhaps most remarkably a number of these buildings have survived and have since been excavated, for example the Mint. "The Mint seems to have been functioning by the end of 402," Herrin reveals. "It was one mint for the gold coins and another mint for the bronze, and some silver."

One of the more interesting figures in the city during this period and one who is featured prominently in Herrin's study is Galla Placida, the daughter of Theodosius I and the wife of Constantius III. "She was officially orphaned at around three or four years old and was sent to live with her brother, most likely in Ravenna," Herrin says. "It's clear that she was very familiar with Rome and had a very traditional imperial upbringing. She would have learned Greek and Latin as well as all the things that women had to learn, mainly weaving, making clothes, embroidery, sewing, etc." However, Placidia's life was about to take a terrifying turn when in 410, at the age of 22 she was kidnapped by the Goths during the second sacking of Rome. Herrin explains: "She must have been a very honoured prisoner because she was an imperial princess and therefore a very

402 CE
The new capital
Ravenna is made the new capital of the Western Roman Empire by Honorius following the sacking and fall of Rome itself.

476 CE
Battle of Ravenna
Ostrogoth Odoacer defeats the armies of Emperor Romulus Augustulus, signalling the end of the Western Roman Empire. Odoacer names himself the first King of Italy.

490 CE
Theodoric the Great comes to power
After assassinating Odoacer, Theodoric becomes king and initiates a 33-year period of peaceful rule.

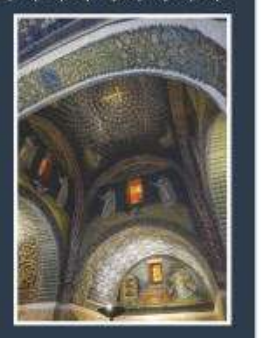
540 CE
Belisarius takes Ravenna
Following several long years of fighting, Belisarius is able to seize Ravenna from the clutches of the Ostrogoths, who never again regain control of the city.

584 CE
Exarchate of Ravenna established
Ravenna is made an Exarchate (a lordship) in the Byzantine Empire and a centre of the empire's power. This ends in 751 when the last Exarch is put to death by the Lombards.

RELICS OF LOST EMPIRES

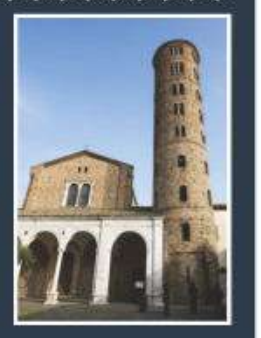
A number of Ancient Ravenna's buildings still survive. Here are five that you can visit

Mausoleum of Galla Placidia



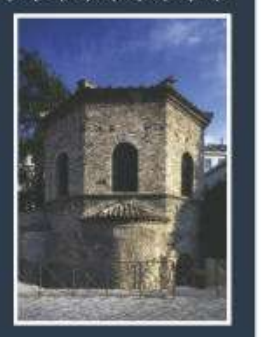
Containing the oldest Christian mosaics in Ravenna, the mausoleum was built in the early fifth century by Galla Placidia. The mosaics are floor-to-ceiling and are renowned for their sublime beauty. It is unclear who the mausoleum was intended for and it is doubtful that Placidia herself was ever buried here.

Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo



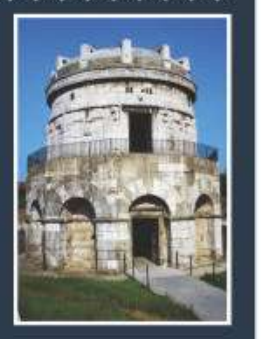
Famous for its mosaic-lined walls, the basilica was constructed by Theodoric the Great and is a vast cathedral. When added to the UNESCO world heritage list in 1995 it was described as "one of the most important buildings from this period of crucial cultural significance in European religious art".

Arian Baptistery



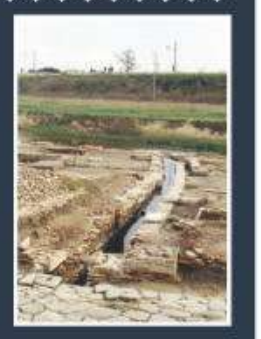
Another construction of Theodoric the Great, the Arian Baptistery was a result of Arianism becoming the official religion of his court. Whereas the orthodox view holds Christ and God as equals, Arianism believes Christ, despite still being a divine figure, is inferior to God. The Baptistery was based on its orthodox predecessor.

Mausoleum of Theodoric the Great



The final resting place of the Ostrogothic king, this is a remarkable building with a huge 36-foot dome constructed of limestone imported from Istria. When Belisarius took the city in 540 CE, his men broke into the tomb and transformed it into a church. Theodoric's bones were scattered.

Roman port of Classis



Remarkably, some ruins of the Roman port of Classis still remain to this day. The port would be the origin of Ravenna's growth as a city, with installations built for over 250 ships. The strategically vital port became the centre of the Roman's Eastern Mediterranean navy.

5x © Getty Images

important bargaining chip. She spent three or four years moving around with the Goths as they tried to establish themselves in the western half of the Roman Empire." However, such was the respect and adoration for Placidia from the Visigoths that it was during her imprisonment that Ataulf, their king, chose her to be his bride. "They had a son who they christened Theodosius," continues Herrin. "This is a very important fact because it indicates that the Goth leader knew his wife was the daughter of Theodosius and had royal Roman blood in her veins." Unfortunately the child would die before his first birthday and it was not long after that Ataulf too would be killed by a rival. "Galla Placidia found herself a widow," Herrin continues, "and it's at that point her half brother, Honorius, finally made an agreement to bring her back to Rome."

Upon returning to Rome, Placidia's status remained unaffected by her captivity and her new knowledge of the Gothic language made her an important diplomatic figure. To the Goths, too, she seems to have remained adored. "She returned from Gothic captivity with an armed guard, who were determined to protect her and to be with her as if she were their own," explains Herrin. "She had been adopted by the Goths and understood them in a way that very few people did at the time." As for her impact on Ravenna, Placidia would be responsible for adorning the city with a large number of churches and religious buildings. One, the Mausoleo di Galla Placidia (the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia), is an impressive structure lined with many breathtaking mosaics and can still be visited today. Historians doubt whether Placidia herself was buried here, and it's most likely that she was in fact buried in Rome where she died in 450 CE. However, there is one popular legend that says her body was interred here during the Middle Ages, where it was seated on a throne and visible through a peephole until it was accidentally burnt during the 16th century.

It was four years after Placidia's death that one of the most important figures in Ravenna's long history would be born – Theodoric the Goth. "He is important because he had a very clear idea of what made an imperial ruler," Herrin explains. "He'd spent the decade of the 460s as a young man in Constantinople as a hostage for his father's good behaviour. The Eastern Roman Emperor had had many battles with the Goths but a peace was signed and was guaranteed by the exchange of hostages. For a whole 10 years, Theodoric lived in the great palace in Constantinople and was educated and trained to be a friend of Rome." Following the death of his father in 471, Theodoric became his successor and worked with the then Emperor Zeno. In 483 he was made commander of the Eastern Roman military and a consul the following year. However tensions between Zeno and Theodoric remained, with the latter often raiding Roman territories. In 476, the Barbarian ruler Odoacer had deposed Romulus Augustus, marking the end of the Western Roman Empire. By 488 Odoacer had settled himself comfortably in Ravenna and ruled all of Italy as its first king. Zeno ordered Theodoric to make his way to Italy, retake the entire peninsula and then rule in his name.

RAVENNA REMAINED UNDER CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CONTROL AND WAS NEVER REGAINED BY THE GOTHS

However, despite conquering most of the country, Theodoric was unable to capture Ravenna itself, but Odoacer, having lost considerable power and territory, agreed to rule alongside him. It was shortly after this peace was initiated that Theodoric demonstrated his more brutal side and invited Odoacer to a banquet where he was assassinated, supposedly by Theodoric's own sword.

Ironically, this rather bloodthirsty start to Theodoric's reign was not a sign of things to come and his 33-year rule of Italy is one marked by peace. He encouraged the Ostrogoths to live alongside the Roman population, not to raid or pillage their lands, and he demanded his soldiers behave decently. "Theodoric had imposed a degree of tolerance in the city of Ravenna, which had a very important afterlife," Herrin explains. "He said that the Jews could rebuild their synagogues and he ordered the Catholic bishop to help in the payment of this rebuilding. They weren't allowed to expand the synagogues, but they were allowed to rebuild them." Much of his experience was no doubt learned during his ten years as a hostage

in Constantinople. "He learned how to be a ruler; he learned the importance of ruling legally, of appointing judges to administer the law, of making sure that the taxes were fair. He brought with that knowledge a sense that the Goths were to be a grander, better, more important government than the Romans. He made Ravenna a very important centre of government in the western half of the Roman Empire."

Theodoric the Great would die in 526 and by 530 the first Byzantine emperor, Justinian I, was seeking to regain much of the territory the Eastern Roman Empire had previously lost. By now Italy was under the control of the Ostrogoths and Africa had been seized by the Vandals. Belisarius, Justinian's leading commander and general, was ordered to begin a vicious campaign to reconquer these territories.

"Belisarius was sent by Emperor Justinian in the 530s to conquer Italy," Herrin explains. "And this followed on from a very successful conquest of North Africa. Belisarius was able to capture the Vandal king and queen and took them all back to Constantinople. Now they thought, 'Well we conquered the Vandals relatively quickly, why not conquer the Goths in Italy?' However, Belisarius found that the Goths were far more vicious an opponent than the Vandals and as a result he was held up at several fortified places such as Naples. This meant his conquest of Italy was very slow in comparison to Africa." Eventually Belisarius made his way across the peninsula and arrived at Ravenna itself. "In 540 Belisarius negotiated an entry into the city," Herrin continues. "It was not taken by storm, the Goths negotiated to let the Romans in, but as soon as they did the Roman army marched in and occupied it. I suspect the Goths probably felt they had been deceived by the negotiations. They immediately elected a new king and set about reorganising themselves but Ravenna remained under Constantinopolitan control and was never regained by the Goths."

ABOVE Romulus Augustus handing over the crown to Odoacer

BELOW Mosaic depicting Emperor Justinian (centre) and Belisarius, among others

The following centuries would remain just as turbulent for the great city but it is arguably its role as a new capital for the Western Roman Empire and the rule of Theodoric the Great that remain some of the most fascinating periods in its long history. The latter in particular casts a long shadow over European history, with Charlemagne proving to be something of a fan of the Goth king. Famously, he would visit Ravenna and remove a huge statue of Theodoric (which had once stood outside the Ostrogoths' palace) and have it transported over the Alps to his palace in Aachen. Yet the story of the city is arguably as rich as Rome's itself, and we have only been able to scratch the surface here. Herrin's work is an exciting attempt to dive deeper into the fascinating and violent history of this ancient city.

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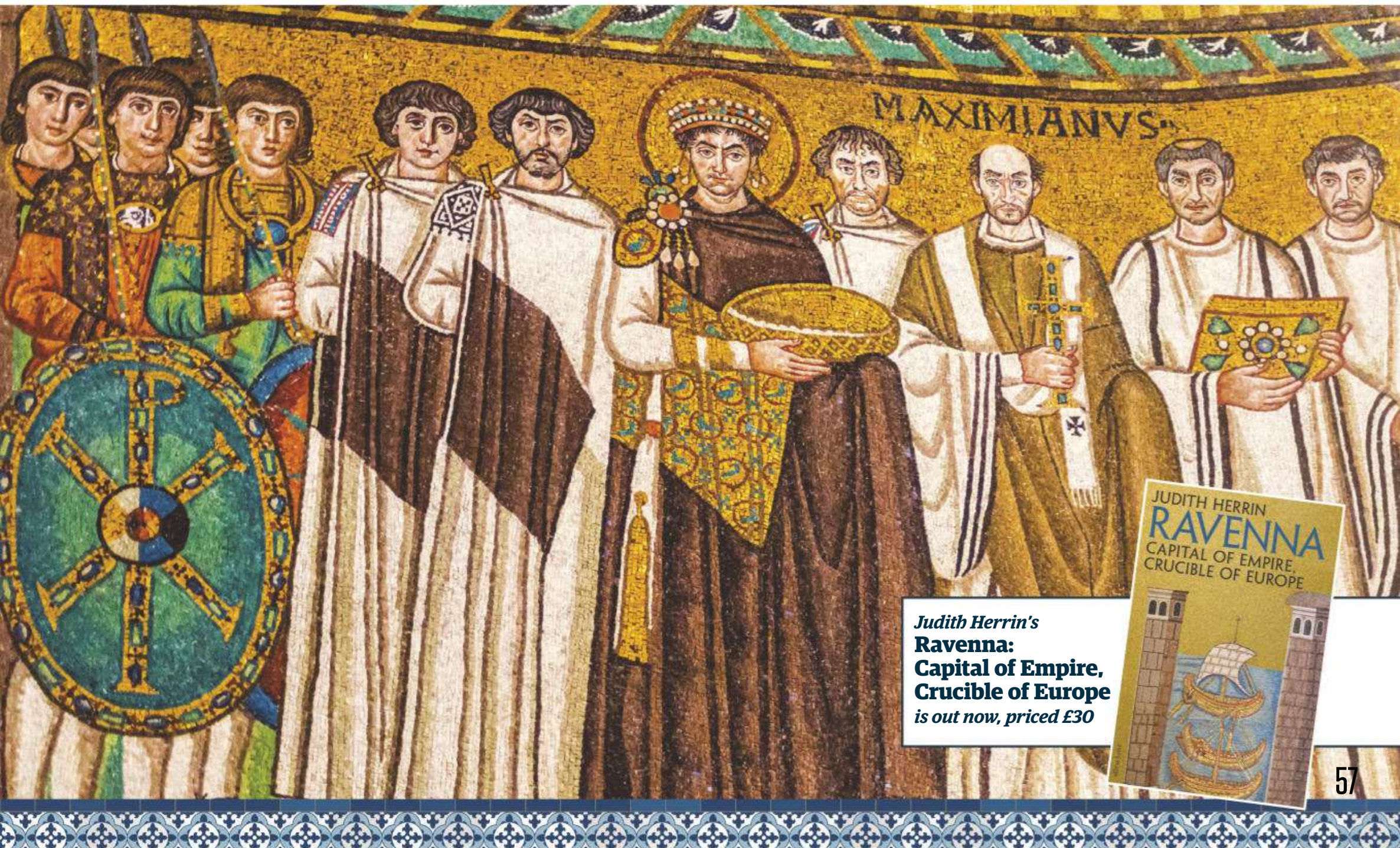

Judith Herrin's
Ravenna: Capital of Empire, Crucible of Europe
is out now, priced £30

‘EVERYBODY HAS AN INTEREST IN HISTORY, WHETHER THEY ADMIT IT OR NOT’

Historian Helen Carr discusses her passion for history and how podcasts are changing the game today

Interview by Jessica Leggett

We may be biased here at All About History, but history is an exciting and evolving discipline. It allows us to examine and explore the past, uncovering fascinating stories, ideas, events and experiences that have helped shape the world we live in today. We spoke Helen Carr, historian, writer, producer and author of the bestselling biography of John of Gaunt, about her love for history, how she conducts her research and why history should be accessible to everyone.

Why did you decide to become a historian?

I can't remember there being a time where I wasn't interested in history. From a young age, I was always going to castles, cathedrals, monuments and archaeological sites of interest. It also came from the fact that my great-grandfather [EH Carr] was a well-known historian. That was something I always grew up in the knowledge of and I was very interested in him, what he did and what he wrote about. It's always been within my family to have an interest in history, even though neither of my parents or any other family members

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have had such an active interest. I think that from a young age I just became fascinated with the past and that never left me. I don't think anybody goes into a career in history thinking that they're going to change the world or they're going to earn a lot of money – it's very much a vocation. It's one of those things that you can't help but want to talk about or work in history.

How do you conduct your historical research?

It depends on what I'm researching. If I'm researching a person then a good place to start is the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, which is always written by somebody who has a lot of knowledge on that person and it's credible. I then read around my subject quite widely to understand what the world looked like in the period that I'm researching. I work very much in the 14th century, so I read everything like who lived where, what was the hierarchy within society, who were the leading figures? Then I do some archival work at relative archives, whether that's the National Archives, the British Library or different places. I think you can never read widely enough. The more reading you do, and the more you have an understanding of the period that you're looking at, the better.

When you're trying to gain a strong understanding of the period, you must rely on the excellent historians who've already done that work and have written fantastic books, both academic and non-academic, about your subject. For the niche stuff, that's when you want to go to an archive. Archival work isn't always fruitful but the experience of handling documents from your period gives you something nonetheless, and it's always worth doing that. Also, move outside of those dusty archives and, depending on what you're researching, visit churches, buildings, castles or the landscape in which battles took place. I think that all of those things in combination give a rich, strong and creative understanding of your period and what you want to talk about.

BELOW
Archival work plays a crucial role when it comes to historical research

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You mentioned that you focus on 14th-century history. What motivates your new directions of study? How do you choose what you're working on?

It's a difficult one because sometimes it comes to me naturally and sometimes it doesn't. For example, my biography of John of Gaunt was something that came naturally to me – I'd been working on him for the last eight years. I chose to research him on an academic level, but then I wanted to do something around him that was more narrative and popular.

Then there are other things and you ask yourself, what piques my interest? Where do I go from here? Again, I think some things find you.

For my academic research at the moment, I'm looking into research around the Black Death and emotions. I'm researching medieval emotions around the plague and that came to me when I was researching John of Gaunt because I came up with all of this stuff in the chronicles about how people were acting around the Black Death. I thought this is interesting, I want to come back to this, so I'm doing that for my academic work. On the back of the John of Gaunt book, I've had to think quite carefully and not just about what fascinates me, but I have to think quite commercially. What is my next step here, how can I tell a wider story but still be very rooted within my research and the period that I feel very strong in? So I think sometimes, again, history finds you but then other times I think you need to think a little bit more laterally and carefully.

"WHEN I TALK ABOUT HOW TO STUDY HISTORY WITH PEOPLE, I SAY DON'T BIND YOURSELF TO LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES"

Helen Carr

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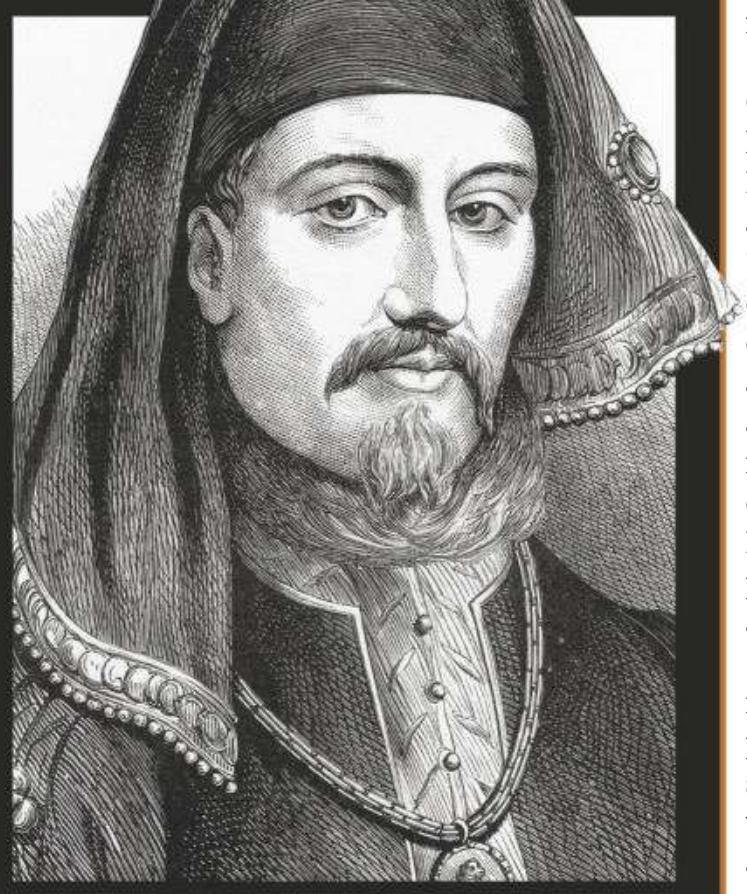
RIGHT The death of Wat Tyler, one of the leaders of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381

BELOW Henry IV was the first of the Lancastrian kings and son the of John of Gaunt



Speaking of your work, your book The Red Prince, a biography of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, was recently published. Why did you decide to bring his story to life?

I've gone in and out of academic studies throughout my life and I've worked in other jobs as well. When I first moved to London after graduating and having a year out, I missed my degree and I think a lot of people have that feeling in their early 20s. One of the things I liked to do when I was living in a houseshare was to go find the historical sites and explore. At the same time, I tried to build up a bit of writing work and I was doing odd little media things. I remember reading on British History Online about the Savoy Palace, this amazing palace that existed on the side of the Thames. I went to go and see what remains and I wasn't naive enough to think that there would be this glittering 14th-century palace still standing, but I thought there'd be something and there was nothing.

I decided to do a research Master's on the Savoy Palace and why it was never rebuilt. The story about why the Savoy was destroyed in the first place is amazing, it's fascinating and so narrative. You couldn't make up that [during the Peasants Revolt of 1381] this hoard of peasants and rebels broke into the palace, burnt it down and blew it up with gunpowder; they thought there were jewels inside and got drunk in the cellars. It's fabulous.

I first became fascinated in John of Gaunt through the Savoy, researching him and what his motivations were. I thought, this guy is so interesting and he represents so much about the 14th century and he was everywhere, on the sidelines of all of these big events. I decided that I wanted to write about him. I got an agent and she agreed to take a bit of a risk and take me on, which for anyone's first book every agent is taking on a little risk. I got rejected by pretty much every publisher and then I had one who took a chance, and now it's *The Sunday Times* best book of 2021. I spent the next three years juggling, working and parenting and I wrote his biography, so it was a labour of love in many ways and a passion project. Wandering around London and the landscape of the Savoy Palace piqued my interest in him and that's why, when I talk about how to study history with people, I say don't bind yourself to libraries and archives. Go out and find places because those places carry something with them, they are very inspirational.

The second series of your popular history podcast, Hidden Histories, is out now – why do you think history podcasts are important?

History podcasts are important because I think that everybody has an interest in history, whether they admit it or not. I think that history is part of us and it's about piquing somebody's interest. I've been to enough dinner parties where I sit next to someone and they're expecting me to say that I'm an accountant, but when I say that I'm a historian, they're so interested. They talk about all the things they know about history and I would argue

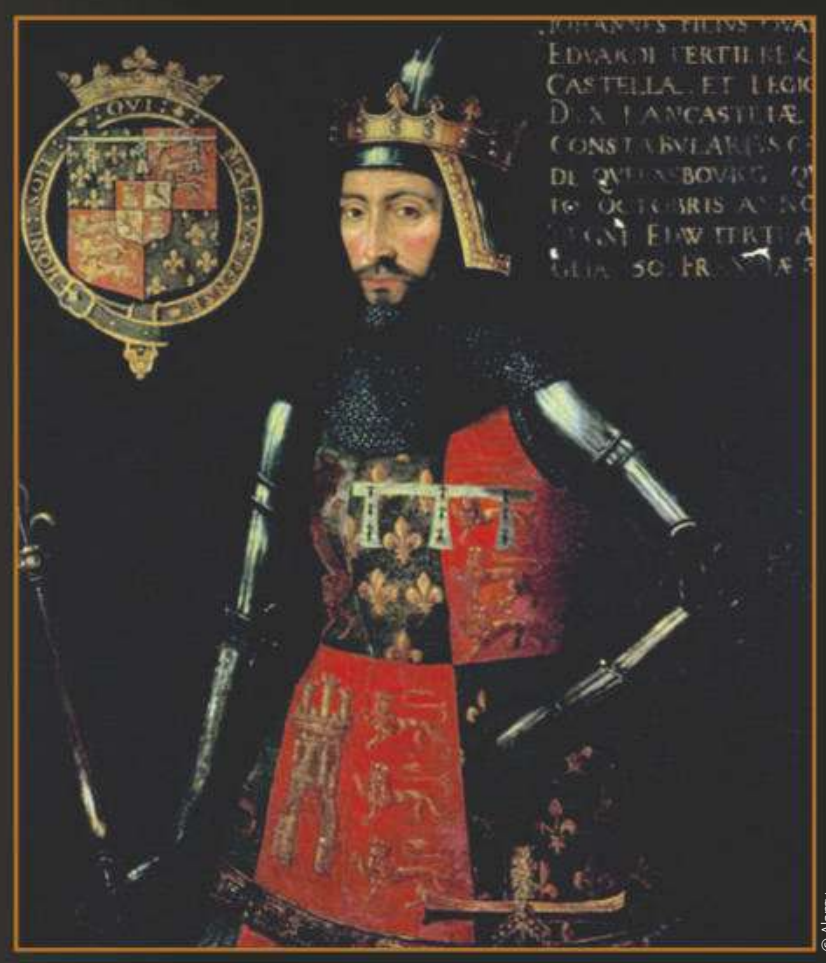
THE RED PRINCE

Who was John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster?

The third surviving son of King Edward III and Queen Philippa of Hainault, John of Gaunt was born in Ghent, Flanders, in 1340. He served as a commander in the Hundred Years War against France and through his marriage to his first wife, Blanche of Lancaster, John inherited the dukedom of Lancaster. Together they had three surviving children, Philippa, Elizabeth and Henry of Bolingbroke, before Blanche's early death in 1368. Three years later, John married Constance of Castile, and through this marriage he attempted to lay claim to the kingship of Castile and Leon.

One of the most powerful and influential men in England, John effectively became regent during the minority of his young nephew, King Richard II, who ascended the throne in 1377. The Peasants Revolt broke out in 1381, triggered by a poll tax implemented by John – who was already unpopular in the capital – to pay for the costly Hundred Years War. During the revolt, the rebels destroyed the Savoy Palace, which was the duke's London residence.

Two years after Constance's death in 1394, John married his long-term mistress, Katherine Swynford, with whom he had four children. He was the founder of the House of Lancaster and his son would ultimately depose Richard and becoming King Henry IV, the first Lancastrian king. Through his children, John was also the ancestor of the Houses of York and Tudor – the Tudor dynasty, founded by King Henry VII, claimed its legitimacy through Henry's mother, Margaret Beaufort, who was a great-grandaughter of John and Katherine.



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till the cows come home that I think everybody deep down has an interest in history.

I think podcasts are great because it allows people to absorb history, and educate themselves in a way that is accessible. It's movable, you don't have to sit and read a book, you can listen to them on a commute. People want to learn and I think that history podcasts allow that. You've got so many different podcasts that interest various people, for example, Susie [Professor Suzannah Lipscomb] is doing one focused on the Tudors and that's going to interest all the Tudor fans, and I think that there are so many different niche angles in history podcasting now. I remember listening to Dan Snow's *History Hit* and there was so much that I wouldn't naturally be interested in, like world wars and Stalin, but I found myself listening to them. I think that there is a place for history podcasts in an educational way, it appeals to everyone whether you're an adult, retired or at school.

There's a huge variety of history podcasts available. How has podcasting changed the game for historians and academics?

I think it's another platform to argue and talk about your research and consolidate it. I think podcasts are very helpful for historians because it's important to be able to discuss the work that you do. I don't think I can answer for everybody's podcast and every historian's feelings about them, but something that I feel very strongly about and what I tried to carry through with *Hidden Histories* is creating a platform for young historians who don't necessarily know what it means to reach and access the public.

I like to interview in a very conversational way and I don't send formal questions before an interview, it tends to be very fun. The idea is that you can be having a chat about this in a pub and you can take something that is incredibly niche and make it wider, bring out all of those narratives, threads and stories within it – it's the stories that engage people. I think that *Hidden Histories* successfully provides that platform for young academics who are used to delivering papers to people to talk about their subjects in a very light-hearted and inviting manner.

Podcasts are just one of the platforms for public history. Why

RIGHT The *Hidden Histories* podcast covers various topics, including disability in Early Modern Europe. Pictured here is King Louis XIV of France in a wheelchair

BELOW The Black Death was one of the most devastating pandemics in human history

© Alamy

'UNDERSTANDING OF THE PAST IS KNOWLEDGE AND KNOWLEDGE IS POWER'

Carr reveals what studying the past can reveal about our present and, especially in light of COVID-19, why we need a better understanding of the past

I think the past informs the present. I don't think we can draw parallels exactly to the past but we can learn from it. Regarding COVID, I couldn't speak for some of the later pandemics but certainly, for the Black Death, the isolation, shielding and all that sort of thing was all implemented in the 14th century with the plague. People emotionally responded to mass epidemics and pandemics, we all feel things around it, and it's interesting to see how industries continued – some thrived, some went under – it's a bit of a mirror image as to what we're going through at the moment.

Also, we see the same attitudes in terms of journalism and the printing press; historians in the Middle Ages were effectively the press journalists of today, commentators of the now. You talk about Piers Morgan giving Meghan Markle a hard time – you should have seen Thomas Walsingham in 1376 giving Alice Perrers a hard time, calling her an unscrupulous whore! Our attitudes in some ways don't change and I think that we can learn from the past and we can be informed by the past. We can definitely form some links to the past, but I don't think that we can say that's exactly how it was before and therefore we must act in that way. What we can learn is how not to act and so when they say history repeats itself, unfortunately, I don't think that's necessarily a good thing because people haven't learnt. Understanding of the past is knowledge and knowledge is power.

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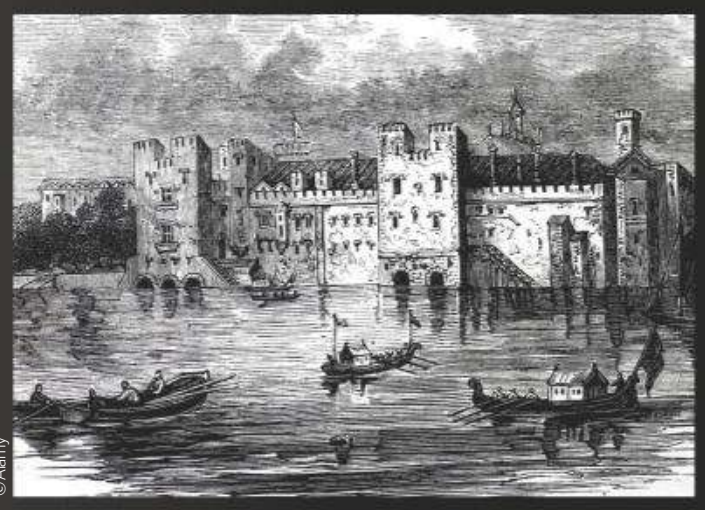

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LEFT A 19th-century illustration depicting the Savoy Palace on the River Thames

BELOW-LEFT The ruins of the Chapel in the Savoy Palace, London, c. 1795-96

"HISTORY IS A SUBJECT THAT'S CONSTANTLY MOVING, CHANGING AND BEING REWRITTEN, AND IT INFILTRATES EVERYTHING"

do we need public history and why is it important?

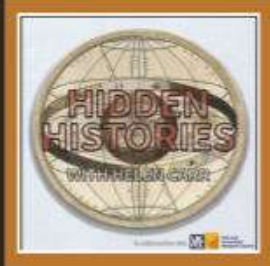
I don't think that there would be as much of a need for academic history if there was no need for public history. In my mind, there are different pillars of studying history and public history and academic history feed into each other. They're incredibly important because as a GCSE or an A-level student, you've got to make your decision to go to university and study something if that's what you want to do. If there's no public history, why would you choose to do history? Public history is everywhere. It's in museums, country houses, castles, magazines, it's on the TV. Academic history informs that public history, both play an incredibly important part and they need each other to function and survive.

There's a very big difference between history and academic history. It only takes reading a narrative like a popular history book and reading an academic book to see that, but we need those statistics and we need those intense analyses. For some of my academic work at the moment, I'm looking into brass manufacturing around the 14th century, how people were commemorated on brasses around churches and how we can tell some emotions from that. That's a very academic angle, but as a narrative historian as well I know how I can weave that interest and that detail into a story. You need both; you can't tell the story without the information and the information won't get out to a wide audience and keep the discourse and the discipline moving without people being interested in those stories.

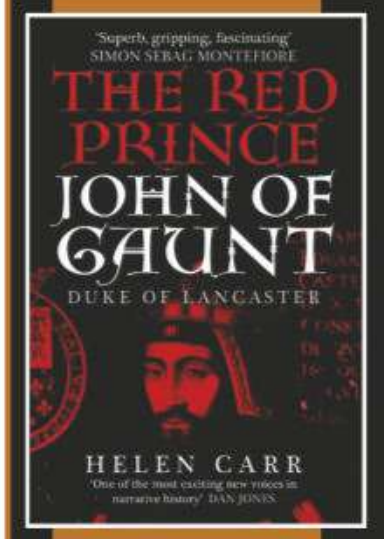
What would you say to those interested in studying history? Why is it an exciting field?

There's so much that you can do with history and I think, in many ways, it can be an incredibly analytical but creative subject because history is interpretation. You can take something that interests you, you can read around it, do your research and you can interpret it in the way that you feel is appropriate. We don't know what happened, nobody knows because we weren't there. It's all interpretation and that's what makes history so fascinating. It's a subject that is constantly moving, changing and being rewritten and it infiltrates everything. It is an exciting subject that should be studied widely because the skills you learn in history can apply to so much. I think that it's important for people to remember that it's never a wasted A-level or degree just because it is a humanities degree.

Every historian has struggled with the natural inclination to go into academia, but then I know lots of historians who are very fed up with academia and they don't feel that that's going anywhere. It's a really sad thing because people think it is a very limited subject, but then I would also argue that if history is something that interests you, don't worry too much about where it's going to take you right now. Go for it, learn and enjoy it because you're never going to get that time back again. Sometimes you hear, 'Oh, I love history so much but I think economics is gonna get me a better job." I would probably say no, I don't think it would. Do what you love and you can think about a job after that.



The second series of the Hidden Histories podcast is out now


'Superb, gripping, fascinating'
SIMON SEBAG MONTEFIORE
THE RED PRINCE
JOHN OF GAUNT
DUKE OF LANCASTER
HELEN CARR
'One of the most exciting new voices in narrative history' DAN JONES

THE RED PRINCE: JOHN OF GAUNT, Duke of Lancaster by Helen Carr is out now from Oneworld

The Spanish tercios fought a desperate last stand against French cavalry and artillery

BATTLE OF ROCROI

FRANCE, 19 MAY 1643

Written by Tom Garner

The Thirty Years' War was one of the most devastating conflicts in European history, an apocalypse only comparable to the later Napoleonic and world wars. Some parts of what is now Germany lost two-thirds of its population and it is estimated that perhaps eight million people perished as a direct result of the war. At the heart of this struggle was the fight between France and Spain – the Battle of Rocroi was the climax of this ultimate duel of nations.

Spain had been involved in the war almost from its inception. It was the pre-eminent power on the continent and, in addition to its Iberian heartlands, held vast territories including northern Italy, the Franche-Comté area in what is now eastern France and the Spanish Netherlands in Belgium and Luxembourg. To get to these territories, supplies

The French and Spanish arranged their armies in almost identical formations on marshy ground near Rocroi

© Mary Evans

© Jose Cabrera

and soldiers marched along 'The Spanish Road', which snaked north from Italy until it reached the Spanish Netherlands.

The extensive logistics involved were aided by the fact that most of the road passed through territory held by the powerful Habsburg dynasty. In the 17th century, most of Europe was ruled by the Habsburgs, who were divided into two branches. In 1643, one branch was ruled by Ferdinand III, who was the Holy Roman Emperor and ruler of Hungary, Bohemia, Croatia and Austria. The other was led by Philip IV of Spain, who also ruled Portugal and the Spanish Netherlands. His additional titles included the Duchy of Burgundy, sovereign of several Italian states and ruler of a vast colonial empire. Habsburg territory surrounded the land borders of France, making the French extremely nervous about the security of their frontiers. Even at sea they could not feel secure, as Spain was also the dominant naval power, operating separate fleets in the Atlantic and Mediterranean.

Consequently, the French developed a siege mentality and began using diplomatic means to undermine Habsburg supremacy. Cardinal Richelieu, the powerful chief minister of Louis XIII, led these efforts in the early 1630s, and in 1635 he declared war on Spain. At first events did not go well for the French as the Spanish invaded and ravaged northern France.

At the end of 1642, Richelieu died and was followed to the grave six months later by Louis XIII, who was succeeded by his four-year-old son Louis XIV. With a child on the throne and its most capable minister dead, France was caught in a moment of weakness that Spain saw the opportunity to exploit. Within five days of Louis XIII's death, a large army invaded northern France from the Spanish Netherlands.

In May 1643, Spain invaded France with an army of 26,000 men and the intention of marching on Paris. Their plan was to approach from the north-east through the Ardennes forest. Blocking their path was the fortress town of Rocroi. Despite being garrisoned by only 400-500 soldiers, Rocroi's location was strategically important. It lay on the border with the Spanish Netherlands and was surrounded by the dense forests of the Ardennes. Opposing Spain's army was the town's garrison and the Army of Picardy, numbering some 22,000 men. The French were outnumbered and their general was not a veteran.

The Duc d'Enghien orders his troops to stop fighting as the Spanish offer surrender

© Alamy

The commanders that faced one another at Rocroi could not have been more different both in character and experience. Aged 46, Spanish General Don Francisco de Melo was an accomplished politician and ambassador who had become the governor of Flanders in 1641. More importantly, he had already won a battle against the French in 1642 at Honnecourt. De Melo cautiously chose not to exploit this victory in 1642. He believed he could successfully consolidate his triumph in preparation for the following campaign, when he would have more fresh troops. In 1643, de Melo would have been more than confident of his chances of success.

Facing de Melo was Louis de Bourbon, Duc d'Enghien. At the alarmingly young age of 21, Enghien was a senior member of the French royal family but an untried general. He was a member of the Condé branch of the House of Bourbon and cousin to Louis XIII and XIV. As befitting his high rank, Enghien had received a thorough education, but his experience of military affairs was quite limited. Before 1643, he had only seen action at the sieges of Arras and Perpignan, neither of which he had been in command for.

Pikemen were an essential component of the Spanish tercio. This particular soldier is holding a halberd

© Jose Cabrera

Having approached Rocroi, de Melo immediately surrounded the fortress – he did not want the town to remain uncaptured in his rear while he continued to Paris. Enghien rapidly marched to relieve Rocroi and fend off the Spanish, but while he was moving, he received word there were 6,000 Spanish reinforcements marching to Rocroi to supplement de Melo's numbers. Enghien knew he had to defeat de Melo before the reinforcements could tip the balance.

To approach Rocroi, there was only one access road, and it ran through a deep defile in a ridge south of the town. Luckily for the French, the road was unguarded and Enghien safely passed through. Not guarding this southern road to Rocroi was a mistake the Spanish would come to regret.

The area immediately around Rocroi was a small clearing in the Ardennes forest. When de Melo saw the French deploying behind him, he reordered his forces on a facing ridge next to the fortress. Night was falling, but nonetheless a French cavalry unit attempted to relieve the town. This failed and the cavalry were repulsed.

Before dawn on 19 May, the two armies lined up in very similar positions to the previous day. Both sides placed their cavalry on the flanks and the infantry, which was arranged in two lines, was placed in the centre. Finally, each army's artillery was drawn up in front of the infantry. There were also reserves: the French could call upon two squadrons of cavalry, three battalions of infantry and six companies of gendarmes. The latter was a relatively new type of unit that consisted of lightly armoured troops armed with pistols and swords. The Spanish had two squadrons of cavalry in reserve in addition to the 6,000 reinforcements that were on their way.

In this sense, the two armies appeared almost identical, both in the deployment of their positions and the numbers of frontline soldiers and reserves. Enghien and de Melo were even stationed in their respective right cavalry wings, creating a strange sense of military symmetry. But one of the unlikely differences between the two armies was loyalty.

The French army, with the exception of some Swiss, Scottish and Hungarian troops, was almost entirely French in its composition. On the other hand, the 'Spanish' army was a melting pot of different nationalities drawn from many different parts of Europe. It would be more accurate to call de Melo's force an 'Imperialist-Habsburg' army, as the troops all came from lands controlled by Habsburgs, but swore different allegiances, either to Philip IV or the Holy Roman Emperor.

This diversity of allegiances, under the umbrella of Habsburg authority, would have a decisive effect on the course of the battle. The Spanish may have been exceptionally well trained, but their lack of national cohesiveness meant that units were not fully inclined to support one another in a common cause. To assert Spanish authority, de Melo ensured that Spaniards commanded the majority of his wings and brigades and the core of the infantry centre was filled with the veteran Spanish tercios. The French, on the other hand, were fighting on home territory and were filled with a proud sense of national defiance against a belligerent invader.

At dawn, Enghien opened the battle with an infantry assault on the Spanish centre while the right cavalry wing attacked the opposing Spanish cavalry. The infantry attack failed but the French cavalry managed to rout its Flemish opponent, exposing the Spanish centre. Despite this initial setback, the Spanish centre held its position. Buoyed by the success of its right wing, the French left cavalry disobeyed Enghien's orders and attacked the Spanish right wing in true cavalier style. However, the ground in front of the cavalry was marshy and the horses became bogged down in the muddy ground. The German and Croatian cavalry observed this foolhardy bravado and immediately counter-attacked, driving the

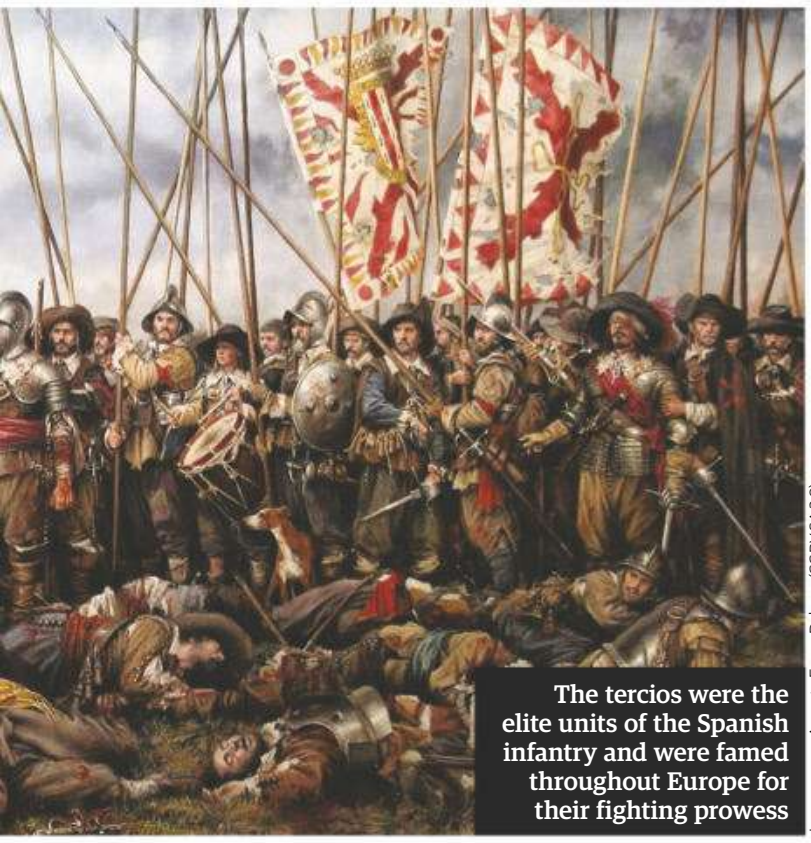
stricken French left cavalry from the field. The cavalier attitude of the French horse nearly cost Enghien the battle after only an hour of fighting. The German-Croats attempted to follow up their success by moving to attack the left infantry flank of the French centre – if this succeeded, de Melo's army could have secured a quick victory. However, Enghien moved his reserves up from the rear and blocked the charge of the German-Croats.

Having saved his infantry, Enghien decided to seize the initiative by launching his entire right wing in a great cavalry charge to strike the flank and rear of the Spanish infantry. It was a daring manoeuvre that required great skill in order to execute, as there was a high chance that the French infantry could be exposed. However, Enghien was lucky in that he had a great cavalry captain commanding the right wing: Jean, comte de Gassion. He had extensive experience fighting for King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden and was a safe pair of hands for this dangerous gamble.

The French cavalry swept around the rear of the Spanish. Faced with this surprise cavalry onslaught, the German, Italian and Walloon infantry collapsed and were routed. At the same time, the French infantry reserves broke the German-Croats assaulting the French left and chased them down.

This was where the polyglot nature of Spain's army caused problems not just for the Spanish themselves but for the French too. The units that retreated in the wake of the French onslaught had been the Germans, Italians, Walloons and Croats. None of them had felt a genuine concern to stand by their Spanish comrades and had chosen flight over military cohesion. De Melo's army was now reduced to the purely Spanish tercios, who stood firm as a rock in the centre of the line.

The French general reformed his cavalry and ordered them to attack the tercios, despite the fact that both men and horses were tired from charging already. The fatigued French twice attacked



The tercios were the elite units of the Spanish infantry and were famed throughout Europe for their fighting prowess

Image source: Augusto Ferrer-Dalmau (CC BY-SA 3.0)

SPAIN

Image source: wiki/Rijksmuseum (CC0 1.0)

DON FRANCISCO DE MELO

Born in Portugal, de Melo was a nobleman who served as a Spanish general at the Battle of Rocroi, but before this he had a lengthy political and diplomatic career. He served variously as Spanish ambassador to the Republic of Genoa, viceroy of Sicily, viceroy of Vienna and governor of the Southern Netherlands before 1643.

Image source: wiki/Rijksmuseum (CC0 1.0)

PAUL-BERNARD DE FONTAINES

Born not long before the Eighty Years' War (or Dutch War of Independence), de Fontaines served in that conflict, first as a captain of the infantry in 1597, then moving to the cavalry before becoming a commander. His skills were better suited to administration than strategy, however, and by Rocroi he was very ill, commanding from a chair.

FRANCE

© Getty Images

LOUIS DUC D'ENGHIEN

The military successes of Louis de Bourbon would see him earn the title of the Great Condé after becoming Prince of Condé in 1646. His victory at Rocroi was his first on a battlefield, and one of his most notable from his achievements during the Thirty Years' War. However, he went on to rebel against Louis XIV and was exiled as a result from 1659.

© Getty Images

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

The Battle of Rocroi began less than a week after Anne had been made Queen Regent of France for her four-year-old son Louis XIV. This was against the wishes of her late husband, Louis XIII, who'd attempted to block such a move in his will, but the Parlement de Paris revoked this provision. Victory at Rocroi was taken as a good omen for Anne and Louis XIV's rule.

© Alamy

JEAN DE GASSIONÇ

Having worked under cavalry tactics innovator Gustavus Adolphus, de Gassion was a shrewd commander and his presence at Rocroi would prove to be pivotal to the success of the French against the Habsburg forces. He would serve both Louis XIII and Louis XIV and was nicknamed 'la Guerre' (War) by Cardinal Richelieu. He died at the Battle of Lens in 1648.

the squares but both assaults achieved nothing. The tercios, true to their reputation, remained immovable. Enghien did not want to waste attacks and potentially lose the battle to the stubbornness of the tercios, and he became determined to break them. In a rather unchivalrous move, he ordered his artillery, along with some captured Spanish cannons, to open fire on the obstinate squares. At the same time, he ordered more cavalry charges.

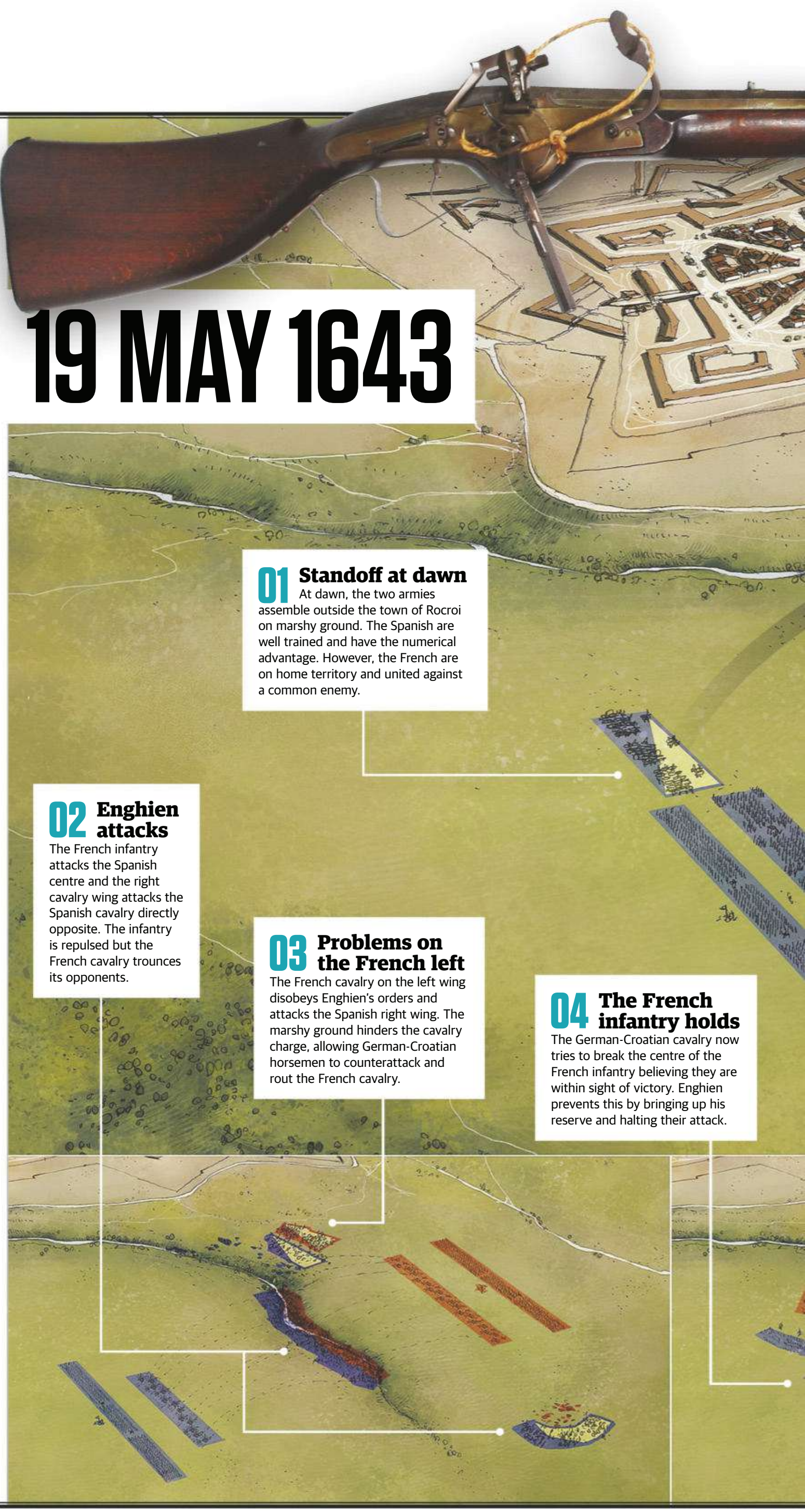
The tercios held firm despite the bombardment and cavalry charges. Eventually, though, the superiority in numbers and onslaughts began to tell on the Spaniards, and they became surrounded and outnumbered with increasing casualties.

As the battle was drawing to a close, some surviving Spanish officers tried to surrender. According to some sources, when the French came forward to accept their surrender, a group of Spanish soldiers opened fire at the approaching soldiers. The reasons for this are uncertain – either the soldiers did not hear the word to surrender or refused to do so. In any case, this action infuriated the French and they resumed their assault. Finally, the remnants of the Spanish artillery and arquebuses ran out of ammunition.

De Melo, whose exact whereabouts at this stage are disputed, decided to surrender so that his remaining troops would not be destroyed. Although it was obvious that he was defeated, de Melo requested that the French offer the same terms of surrender that were generally made to the defenders of a fortress. This request would mean that the Spanish could leave the field with their colours and retain their weapons. This was a rather presumptuous and tenuous demand for de Melo to make for two reasons: first, as the commander of the defeated army he was in no position to bargain with Enghien. Second, the Spanish had not fought inside the walls of Rocroi but just outside, and so had been fighting in open battle and were technically not eligible for these terms. However, Enghien granted this request in a spirit of generosity and perhaps in a respectful gesture to the bravery of the tercios. The exhausted Spanish left the field defeated, but with their honour intact.

The fighting stopped at about 10am. Although the substantial Spanish reinforcement of 6,000 men had appeared near to the battlefield, they wisely stayed away as they could see the battle was lost.

Rocroi had been a bloody encounter: the Spanish lost 7-8,000 men dead or wounded with another 7,000 taken prisoner, while the French lost about 4,000. Though the clash did not end the Thirty Years' War, in the short term France was saved from invasion. For the French, it was a highly symbolic victory as it was one of the few major battlefield defeats of a Spanish army in more than a century. The defeat of the tercios in particular was regarded as a great triumph – the Spanish could never replace their elite infantry, and after Rocroi, Spain became a declining power for the rest of the war. It was now the French who would dominate European affairs.



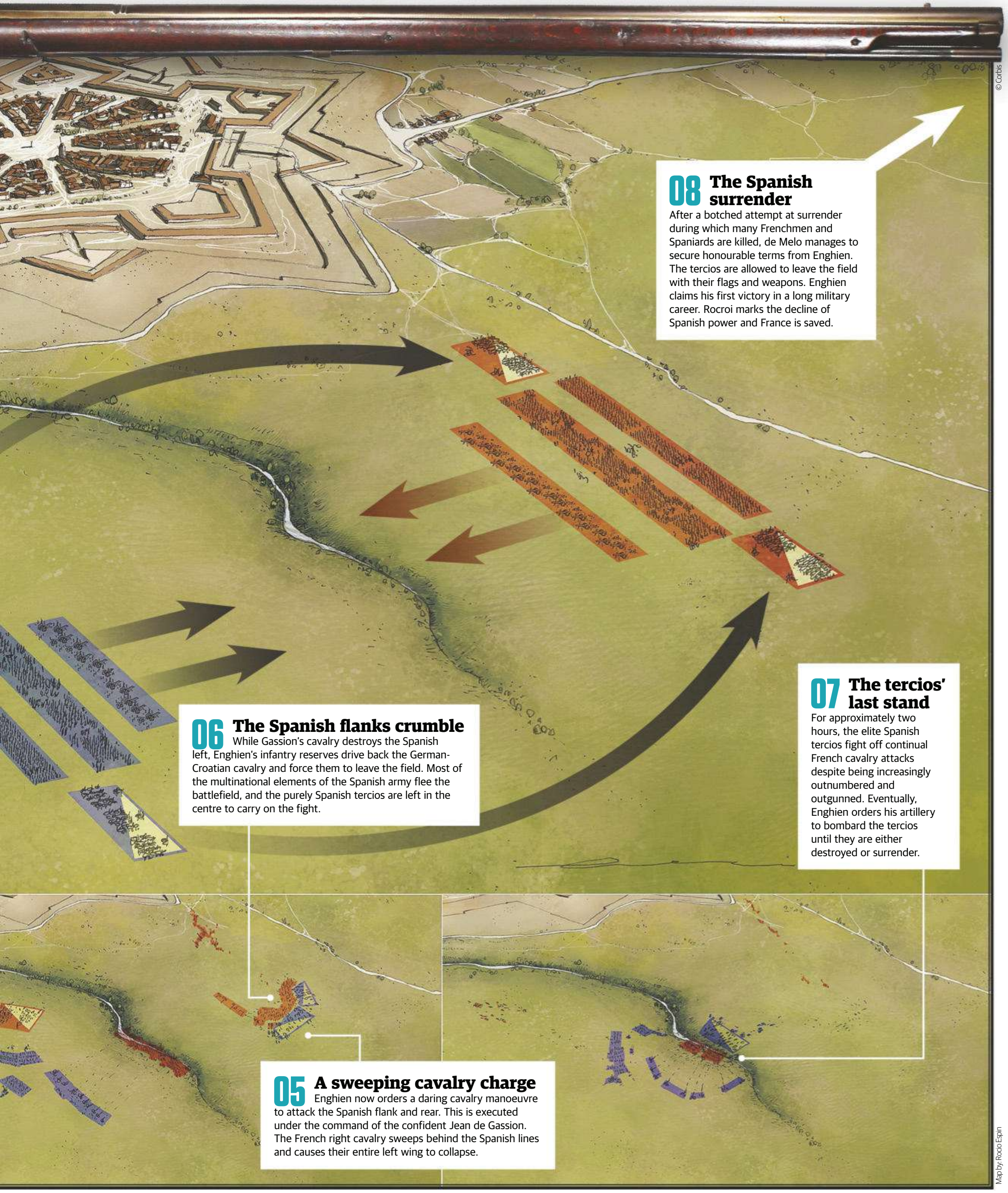
19 MAY 1643

01 Standoff at dawn
At dawn, the two armies assemble outside the town of Rocroi on marshy ground. The Spanish are well trained and have the numerical advantage. However, the French are on home territory and united against a common enemy.

02 Enghien attacks
The French infantry attacks the Spanish centre and the right cavalry wing attacks the Spanish cavalry directly opposite. The infantry is repulsed but the French cavalry trounces its opponents.

03 Problems on the French left
The French cavalry on the left wing disobeys Enghien's orders and attacks the Spanish right wing. The marshy ground hinders the cavalry charge, allowing German-Croatian horsemen to counterattack and rout the French cavalry.

04 The French infantry holds
The German-Croatian cavalry now tries to break the centre of the French infantry believing they are within sight of victory. Enghien prevents this by bringing up his reserve and halting their attack.



08 The Spanish surrender

After a botched attempt at surrender during which many Frenchmen and Spaniards are killed, de Melo manages to secure honourable terms from Enghien. The tercios are allowed to leave the field with their flags and weapons. Enghien claims his first victory in a long military career. Rocroi marks the decline of Spanish power and France is saved.

07 The tercios' last stand

For approximately two hours, the elite Spanish tercios fight off continual French cavalry attacks despite being increasingly outnumbered and outgunned. Eventually, Enghien orders his artillery to bombard the tercios until they are either destroyed or surrender.

06 The Spanish flanks crumble

While Gassion's cavalry destroys the Spanish left, Enghien's infantry reserves drive back the German-Croatian cavalry and force them to leave the field. Most of the multinational elements of the Spanish army flee the battlefield, and the purely Spanish tercios are left in the centre to carry on the fight.

05 A sweeping cavalry charge

Enghien now orders a daring cavalry manoeuvre to attack the Spanish flank and rear. This is executed under the command of the confident Jean de Gassion. The French right cavalry sweeps behind the Spanish lines and causes their entire left wing to collapse.

© Corbis

Map by: Rocio Espin

What If...

CONSTANTINE HAD NOT CONVERTED TO CHRISTIANITY?

How important was the Roman emperor's embracing of the new religion to its spread through the empire and beyond?

Interview by Jonathan Gordon

INTERVIEW WITH

Image courtesy of Harold Drake

HOWARD DRAKE

Dr Drake is professor emeritus at the University of Santa Barbara and specialises in Ancient Rome, with particular emphasis on the fourth century CE and the life of Emperor Constantine.

When Constantine became emperor of the Western Roman Empire in 306 CE the growing religion of Christianity in the region was one of the big issues of the day. Many rulers before him had looked to control or quell this sect, but Constantine was the first to openly proclaim his support and conversion to the new religion. This, aided by Constantine uniting the Eastern and Western Empires from 326 CE, has been seen as a springboard for the expansion and popularity of Christianity in Europe in the years that followed.

What was the status of Christianity in the Roman Empire when Constantine came to power?

Christians were about 10 percent of the population. The big changes that had occurred were in the middle of the third century when, for the first time, Christians were subject to Imperial laws. There were two big persecutions and then in 260 CE the emperor called that off and recognised Christianity as a legal religion. That remained the position for roughly 40 years until the Emperor Diocletian decided it was time to come to terms with what he considered a threat by Christians. He launched the Great Persecution, which lasted from roughly 303 to 313 CE, at just the time Constantine took over. That's part of what makes Constantine so dramatic, that this change from persecution to it becoming a legal and eventually favoured religion is what everybody focuses on.

Why was Constantine's conversion to Christianity important?

I think Constantine's conversion becomes less an issue when you look at it differently. I should preface that by saying I look at this as a policy question. How would a different emperor have looked at it differently? The question for anybody who became emperor in 313 CE would have been: 'What alternatives do I have? This hasn't worked.' The question for a couple of hundred years that historians faced was, was Constantine sincerely converted to Christianity? People would argue that he wasn't sincerely converted. The real question is, what kind of Christianity did he convert to? And when I define the question that way it becomes very clear to me that Constantine understood Christianity to be a kind of belief that could fit in with traditional culture and even traditional politics with a few tweaks around the edges.

Could something like the Edict of Milan have been possible without someone like Constantine?

There is a subset of ancient historians who study this question who still define it in terms of sincere belief, which means if you want to say Constantine was sincere, you have to deny that he did anything good for traditional religion. And so one of the things that they deny is

© Getty Images

Main image sources: © Alamy

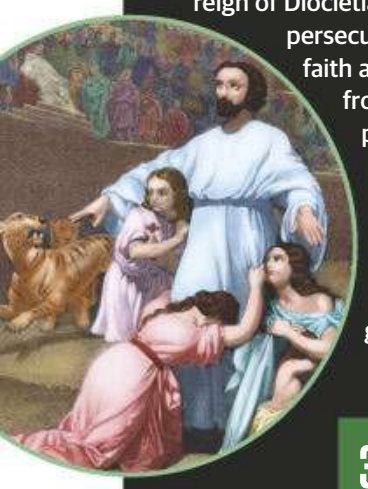
RIGHT
The Donation of Constantine was thought to grant power over the Western Roman Empire to the Bishop of Rome, but was proven to be a forgery

THE PAST

303-313 CE

THE GREAT PERSECUTION

After years of clampdowns on Christian practice often resulting in bloodshed, the reign of Diocletian closed out with one last persecution of the new religious faith across the Western Empire, from 303 to 313 CE. Despite promising no blood would be spilt, violence against Christians was rampant after the emperor published four edicts attempting to create greater unity in his empire.



313 CE

EDICT OF MILAN

Born of negotiations between the Western Roman Emperor Constantine and the Eastern Emperor Licinius in February 313 CE, what has become known as the Edict of Milan was a set of principles set out in a proclamation that allowed religious freedom for all citizens, assured legal rights for Christians and ordered the return of stolen or confiscated Christian property. It was the first sign that the Roman Empire was ready to embrace Christians and give them equal rights in the empire.

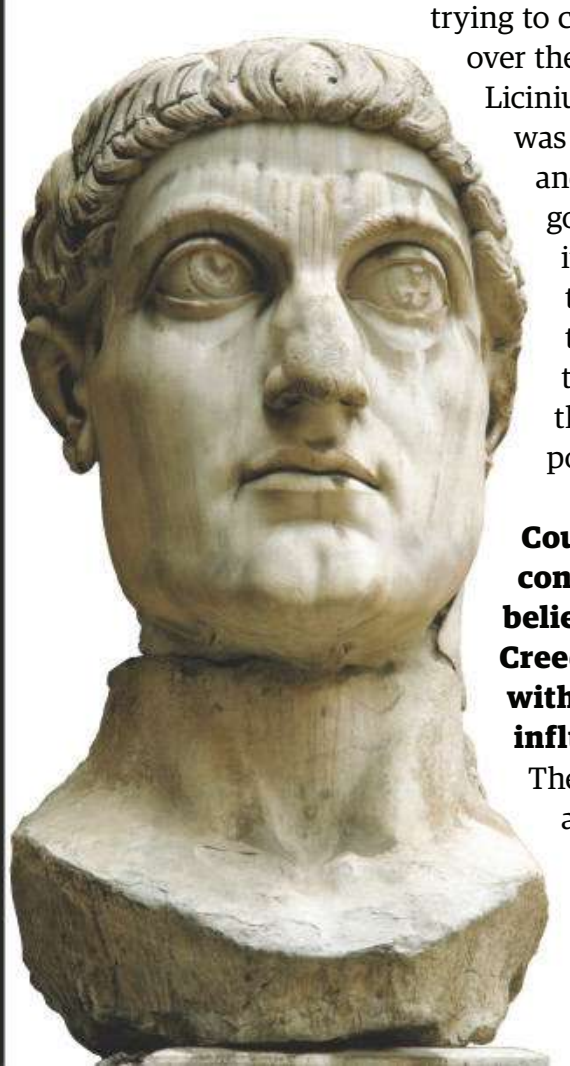
325 CE

NICENE CREED

An important document in the unified version of the Christian faith, the Nicene Creed has long been believed to be the product of the Council of Nicaea, the first ecumenical council that was arranged by Emperor Constantine to answer important questions among Christians. In actuality it is now believed to be a more complex amalgamation of ideas over many more years, but Constantine's influence on this first gathering set the ideas in motion.

ABOVE Raphael's painting of the baptism of Constantine, which took place in 312 CE

BELOW Constantine has been celebrated for his contribution to establishing Christianity in the Roman Empire



the Edict of Milan, which is what makes your questions so fun. Of course, strictly speaking, it wasn't an edict and it wasn't issued in Milan. The Eastern Emperor Licinius met Constantine in Milan right after Constantine's victory in 312 CE and they agreed on a common policy. What the Edict of Milan did was for the first time it gave Imperial recognition not so much of Christianity, but the fact that it didn't assign a specific god or set of gods to the protection of the Roman Empire. Emperor Diocletian had defined the Imperial relationship with divinity in terms of a specific god, in his case Jupiter. Diocletian, for one reason or another, decided that Christians were interfering with that process that he was trying to carry out. The argument over the Edict of Milan is whether Licinius, who was not Christian, was actually pushing for this and Constantine, being a good Christian, was against it. So, perhaps Licinius is the major force behind the Edict of Milan. I don't think that holds up. I think that was Constantine's policy as well.

Could some of the consolidation of Christian belief, such as the Nicene Creed, have been achieved without Constantine's influence?

There's two ways of looking at that. There's one school that says Christians were on an inevitable march to controlling the empire and Constantine just happened to be the person who was around at the time. And the other school says Christianity was on life support and if it hadn't been for Constantine reaching down and pulling them up we wouldn't be talking about Christians today. It was the type of government where the biggest thing was consensus, 'everybody agrees with this'. It shows up on coins all the time, 'Consensus Omnium'. And like most things, it's more an idea than reality.

You have two things going on: Constantine has a political issue, he's got to work with the bishops, but he's in charge of everything. The question is would this problem with Christianity have arisen if it wasn't for Constantine? Probably it would have anyway, because this was a concern to Christians. What Constantine said was, 'I will just support the decision you make, as long as you make it so that there's a consensus', because he'd had that experience and he wasn't going to have it again. The real difference is that he chose to enforce it, but he still wanted consensus.

What influence did Constantine's religious policies have on the Byzantine Empire to follow?

What we call the Byzantine Empire is the part of the Roman Empire that didn't fall, and right down to the fall of Constantinople in 1452 considered itself to be the Roman Empire. If you define Byzantium in that way what you see is continuity of what was called Caesaropapism, and that is the Roman

Emperor continued to be a major force in defining and enforcing Christian beliefs. That is Constantine's influence. In the eastern empire he is revered as a saint.

There's a document that became one of the key documents of the Renaissance, the *Donation of Constantine*, that the Bishop of Rome put forward saying that when Constantine moved to the east and founded Constantinople, he gave the Bishop of Rome control over the western empire. In the Renaissance, it was one of the first great triumphs of critical scholarship when Lorenzo Valla analysed the document and found anachronisms in it that showed that it couldn't have been written before the ninth century, so it showed that it was a forgery. But that's where a lot of our understanding of the impact of Constantine, particularly in the West, came from, that he surrendered rule over the West, which isn't the case. Eastern emperors, and especially vigorous emperors like the Emperor Justinian in the middle of the sixth century, were always trying to find grounds to reconcile the increasingly different ways that the Eastern Church and the Western Church defined problems in Christian belief. Constantine set the precedent for the emperor being a Christian, and being involved in Christian matters.

How much more chaotic and perhaps even violent could religious conflicts have been without Constantine's role?
There are a few recent books that have been arguing, either that this is the effect of Christianity on Constantine, or this is the effect of Constantine on Christianity, which makes it in a way the same question. Were the Christians inherently violent? Were they inherently coercive and intolerant? And my answer is no. There's a statement attributed to Voltaire, but I've never been able to find, where he said, "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." That's toleration. The higher principle for Constantine was peace and consensus. He did take steps against certain pagan temples, but with one exception they can all be defined as steps that an ordinary Roman emperor would have taken.

If you look at it again as a policy question, Christians were a minority and it wasn't just that they were a minority. To have grown as much as they did before Constantine, and particularly after him, the majority of Christians in any generation had to be adult converts. It goes back to the idea that nobody's more Catholic than people who have converted to Catholicism. There was this constant pressure: 'Show us that you're a good Christian.' The easiest way to do that would be to say: 'I hate pagans.'

Do you think Christianity would have spread through the empire without Constantine's support?
This gets to the question of was he a blip and was Christianity on life support? I think Christianity was spreading and there was a trend toward what some modern scholars, including myself, called pagan monotheism. Other people who are more attuned with the theological meaning of monotheism say that can't be, but there's increasing recognition that there's a supreme God who rules over human affairs and manifests his or herself in different peoples in different ways. Towards the end of the third century that supreme God increasingly became defined as the Sun God. There's good reason for that going all the way back to ancient Egypt and Akhenaten, who's called the first monotheist and who takes the Egyptian belief in the supreme God being the Sun and changes that to the incorporeal Sun. Some of the most fascinating discoveries in the last half-century are a couple of synagogues in Israel, dating from the fourth century to over the course of the next century, that have mosaic floors that depict the astronomical table with the Sun God in the middle. Before these were found, Jews would have told you that's impossible. And now there's a big argument over them. What they show is that Jews were participating in this lingua franca, which shows the power and the appeal of this message. Christianity might not have spread 100 percent, just the way it's not 100 percent in our world, but Christianity had a powerful message to a world that was increasingly concerned about how religion affected people's lives.

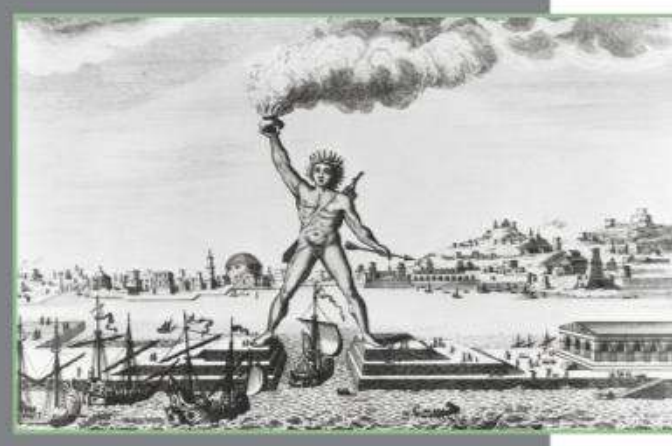
BELOW The first Council of Nicaea was an important gathering of bishops that helped to consolidate Christian dogma in a time of upheaval

THE POSSIBILITY

3RD CENTURY

PAGAN MONOTHEISM

While the concept of pagan monotheism is something of an anachronism since monotheism as a term wasn't coined until the 1600s, the concept of raising one god among others in polytheistic religions, such as Roman Paganism, was not uncommon. The idea of henotheism was gaining some ground in Constantine's time, which might suggest a religion with an all-powerful god was being sought. One of the earliest examples is the Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten (1353-1336 BCE) and, obviously, Judaism was already a powerful faith by 306 CE. The presence of images of the Greek god Helios in some Jewish synagogues dating back to the 3rd century points towards efforts to depict complementary religious ideas that could sit together harmoniously.

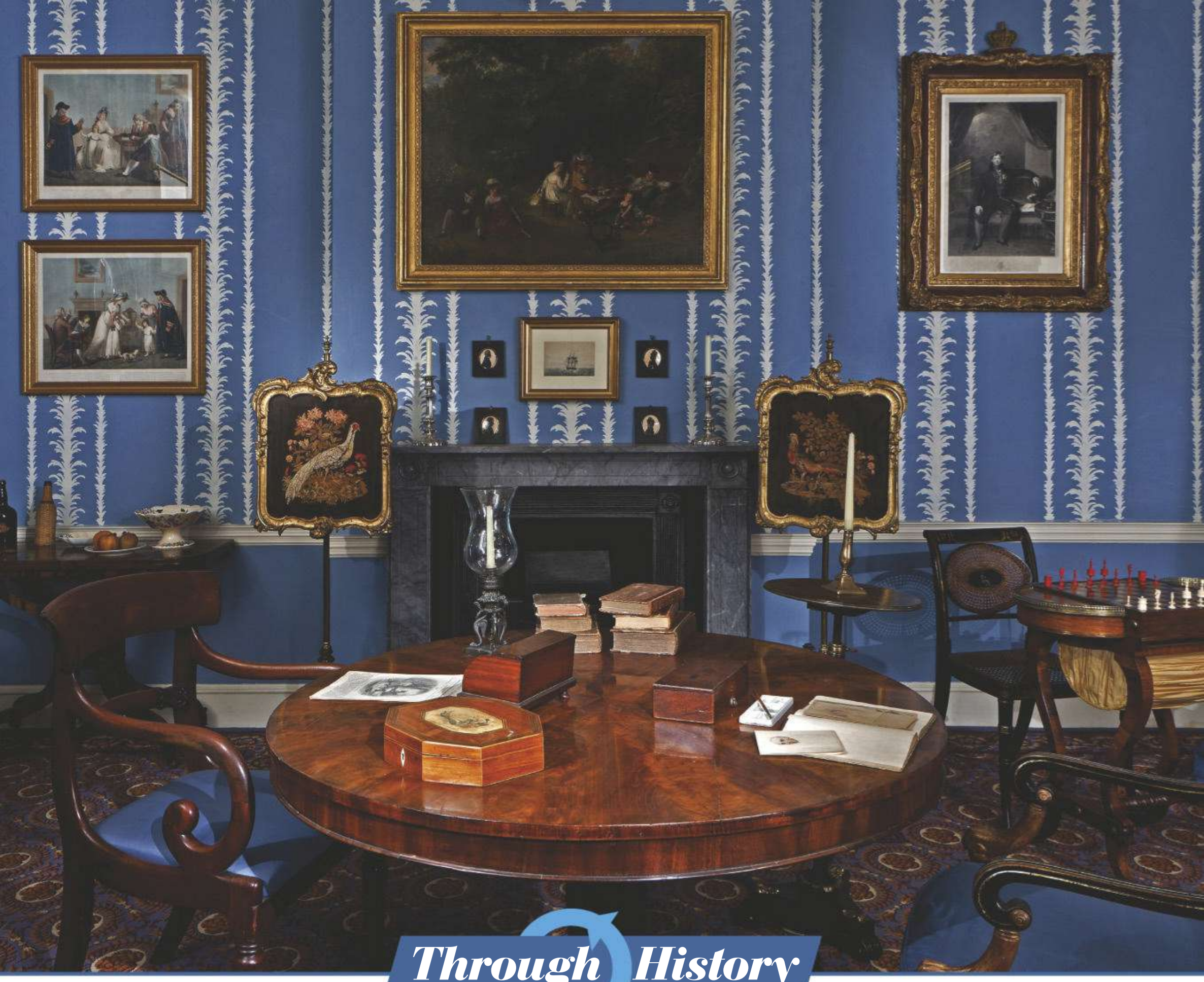


325 CE

RISE OF ARIANISM

One of the important interventions of Constantine was in regards to the Arian Heresy. Arius, a minister in the Church in Alexandria, had proposed a delineation of the Holy Trinity that made God a singular being, indivisible and above Jesus. This was heavily opposed by many sectors of the Christian Church who held firm to the concept of that God and Jesus were equal. When Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea it was precisely to tackle this question and to find a consensus, which in this instance decided against Arius. But without Constantine's influence and his power to enforce the ruling of the council, it's possible that Arianism could've gained ground and a stronger offshoot of Christianity may have been formed.

All images © Getty Images



Through History

HOME IS WHERE THE HISTORY IS

Unlocking the fabulous stories hidden in our houses and the objects that fill them, from the 17th century to the present day

Main image: © Photography Chris Ridley
All other images: © Courtesy of the Museum of the Home

The concept of the 'home' is a fundamental part of everyday life. Our houses are furnished to our individual tastes, and these furnishings are designed to make the occupant feel the maximum level of comfort within their surroundings. We are protective of our homes and they contain personal items and objects that tell a great deal about our lifestyles and interests. To the historian, however, a home can tell us much more than that. What is considered an essential furnishing and what is not has changed drastically over time and reveals a lot about social changes through the years.

Having undergone an £18.1 million refurbishment, the Museum of the Home seeks to chart this fascinating history. From 1800s gasoliers to 1980s thermostats, the museum's collection is vast and comprehensive. Along with the more expected fare, such as a variety of armchairs, there are also examples of items that would have provided entertainment or were a popular pastime, such as playing cards and Videosphere televisions.

The items here not only show how the 'home' has changed, but also highlight other fascinating historical developments. From one of the first home computers to the desire to own cheap affordable artistic prints, the history of the home is the history of society itself.

HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS

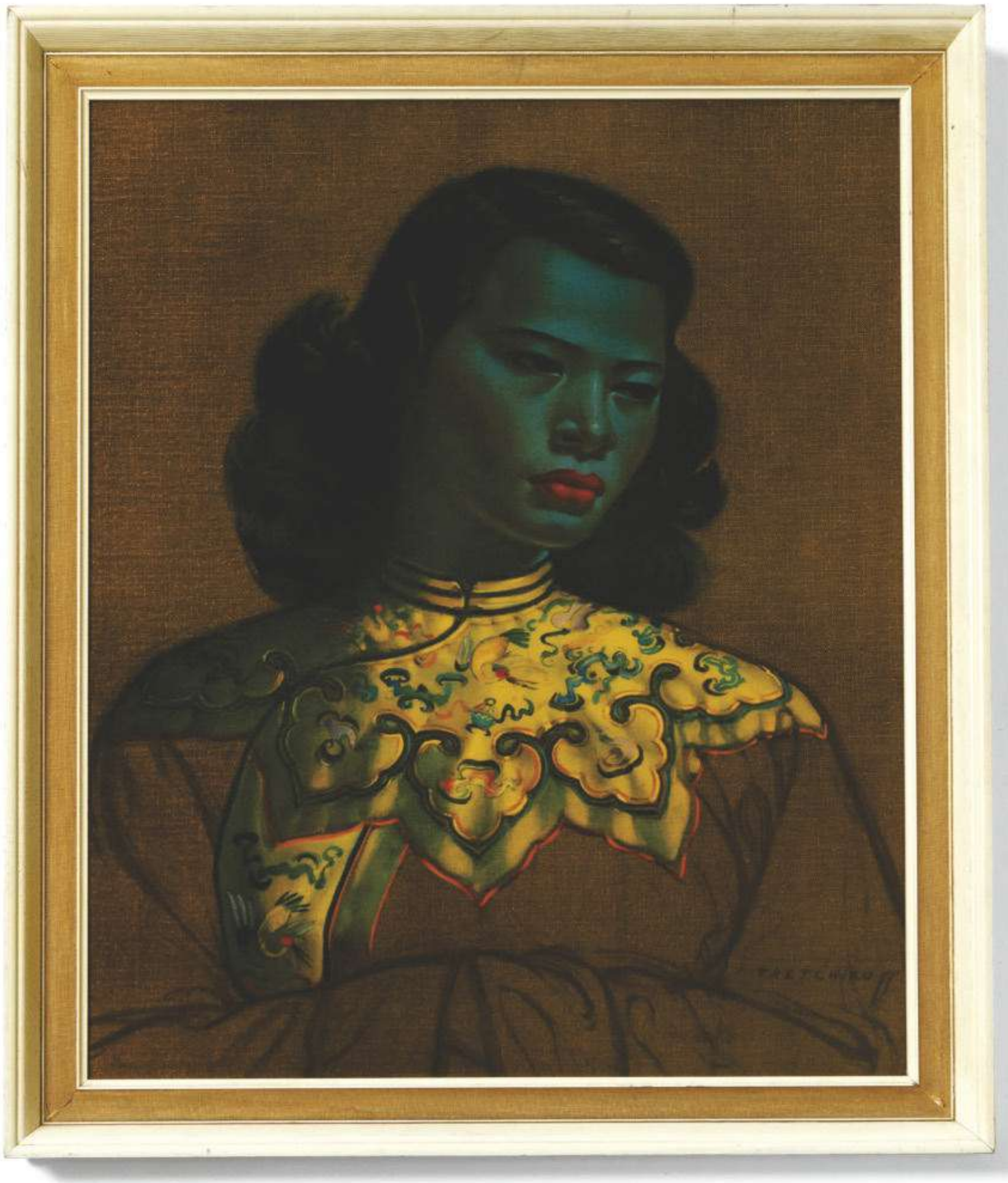
This 1772 print by James Caldwell shows an idealised portrayal of life for servants, or 'downstairs'. For many upper-class households, servants were a necessity. There was a strict hierarchy among servants, which was reflected in both the duties and wages. For example, a scullery maid might be on the lowest wages, but the estate ward would have quite the healthy sum to live on.

VIDEOSPHERE TELEVISION

The shape of this quirky television set was inspired by the helmets of the astronauts on the 1969 Moon landing. Released in 1970, this design was meant to appeal not only to a space-race obsessed public but also to the pop-art tastes of a younger market.

1815 READING, GAMES AND NEEDLEWORK TABLE

This versatile games table was designed for children and contains a reversible backgammon and chess board, a hanging silk bag to store needlework and embroidery, as well as a book-rest for reading. This reflected a greater emphasis in this era on childhood as an important part of life which was to be enjoyed.



SCOOP

Sold by Habitat between 1974 and 1980, this chair named 'Scoop' was designed by Terence Conran and reflected a more relaxed and casual style. Habitat, which Conran founded, had a unique modernist style, which the Design Museum describes as "a British version of Bauhaus".

VLADIMIR TRETCHIKOFF'S *CHINESE GIRL*

This striking 1952 painting by Vladimir Tretchikoff was one of the most reproduced works in the entire world, and prints adorned thousands of homes. Tretchikoff disliked the elitism of the art world and, despite the high prices his art would fetch, mass-produced his prints at affordable prices.

COUNTERFEIT PLAYING CARDS

As playing cards were considered an addictive form of gambling, they were likewise considered a lucrative means through which the government could obtain funds by tax. Although the tax on playing cards had existed since the late 1500s, it was raised considerably in 1710. Shown here is a pack of counterfeit cards from around 1810-20, created to avoid the levy.

AMSTRAD COMPUTER

The first ever word processor available at an affordable price, the Amstrad brought computing technology into the home. Less than 25% of the cost of other computers, the low price helped convince many who were perhaps wary of the new and, at least then, complex technology. Now computers are a fixture of almost every home.

JOHN EVELYN'S CABINET

A renowned author and diarist, whose volumes are an important source of information on 17th century life, John Evelyn's cabinet was commissioned by his wife. Bespoke cabinets would have been very expensive and it is engraved with plants and trees, botany being a subject which fascinated Evelyn.

The Museum of the Home is open now, for more information and to book your free tickets visit: www.museumofthehome.org.uk/

REVIEWS

The books, TV shows and films causing a stir in the history world this month

© MUBI

STATE FUNERAL

Stalin's funeral is recontextualised as an absurd affront to human suffering

Certificate: PG **Director:** Sergei Loznitsa **Cast:** Joseph Stalin, Lavrenti Beria, Nikita Khrushchev **Released:** Out now

Envisioned as a propaganda feature, 40 hours-worth of black-and-white and colour footage was captured by Soviet cameramen across the USSR, along with audio recordings of wireless broadcasts and hagiographic eulogies running to 24 hours. An army of cinematographers photographed crowds as they gathered to hear radio addresses announcing Joseph Stalin's death, in early March 1953, as well as the days preceding the main event, held in Red Square, where thousands upon thousands of party members and the public paid their respects to the dictator, who was lying in state. The proposed film was first put on hold, and then mothballed, after a power struggle emerged among Stalin's cronies, followed by Uncle Joe's regime being officially denounced by Nikita Khrushchev.

Packed away in the Russian State Documentary Film and Photo Archive for over 60 years, a lot of *State Funeral* is new to the world, certainly new to a general audience. Director Sergei Loznitsa has recontextualised this treasure trove of cobwebbed materials, making for an astonishing but gruelling two hours and 15 minutes. Make no bones about it, Loznitsa's opus is not a traditional documentary at all, more an experimental work allowing the carefully selected and assembled images to do all the heavy lifting, achieving a sense of chilling objectivity.

In Loznitsa's inspired hands, there is plenty of scope for unexpected deadpan humour. The sheer monotony of watching people shuffle past Stalin's tiny casket amid mountains of floral tributes develops into something approaching absurdist comedy as much as a patience-testing exercise. Then there's the dirge-like, overbearing classical compositions further policing the solemn mood and speakers repeating the same matter-of-fact lines over and over. What unfolds is a ghoulish and ironic spectacle of epic proportions. The unseen eulogists or the higher-ups delivering speeches at the memorial on camera, all of them drum into everybody how Stalin was great, Stalin was our pal, Stalin was the best thing since sliced bread, move over Jesus Christ. There is a religious fervour on display in the staging of what looks like the biggest send-off of all time, aptly demonstrating the funeral and the outpouring of grief, whether genuine or crocodile tears for the benefit of the camera, was the true zenith and demented culmination of Stalin's cult of personality.

Viewed today, the excessive pomp and pageantry of Stalin's funeral, held on a dreary winter's day, is truly disturbing in its scope, an affront to humanity. All this for a monster who caused death and suffering to literally millions of his countrymen and perceived enemies? Our knowledge of Stalin's crimes against humanity means *State Funeral* is rendered inherently satirical by virtue of time passing and history having revealed a long-suppressed truth.

In discarding with the trappings of a standard documentary format – the voiceover narration, talking heads, onscreen texts establishing certain facts – we are invited to witness proceedings as they were back then, the camera placing us right there in the room, like we're time travellers or party delegates. Therein lies *State Funeral*'s aesthetic and nightmarish brilliance. ***MC***

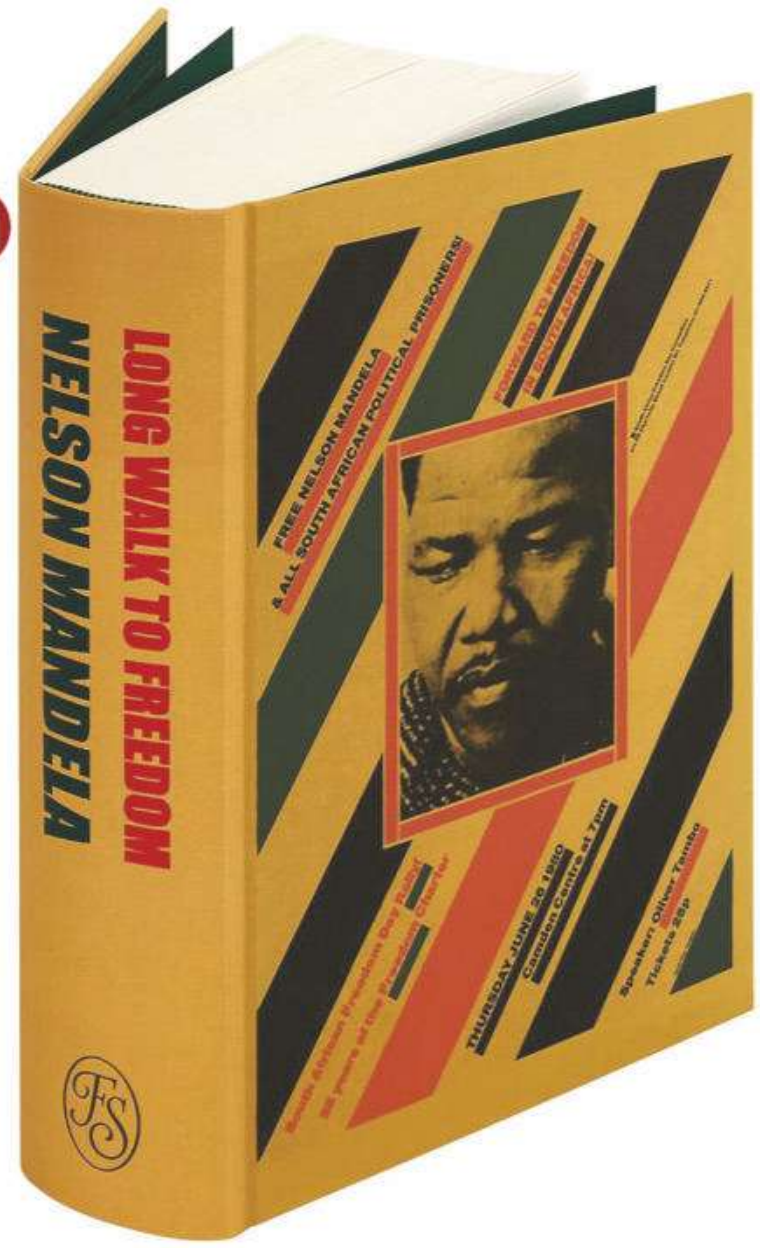
★★★★★

Reviews by
Martyn Conterio, Jonathan Gordon, Catherine Curzon, Jessica Leggett

LONG WALK TO FREEDOM

A gripping and inspirational memoir, expertly repackaged

Author Nelson Mandela **Publisher** Folio Society **Price** £75 **Released** Out now

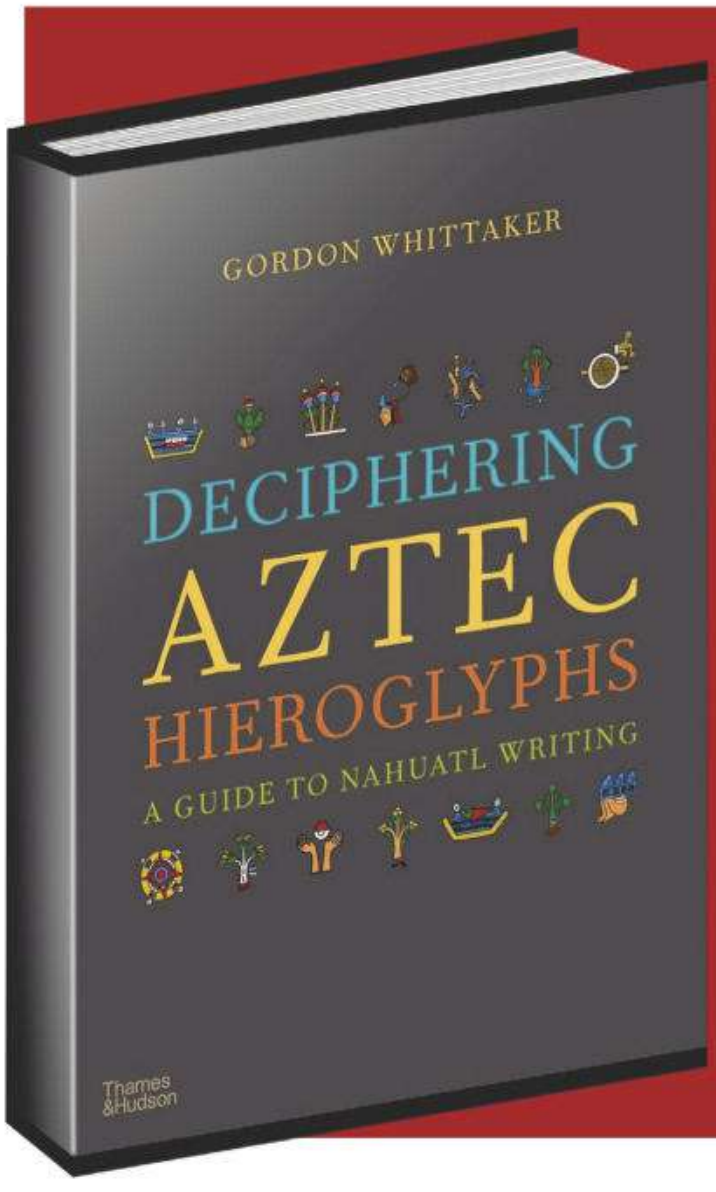


One of the first things that will strike you reading Nelson Mandela's autobiography is the familiar and collegial tone of his writing. For a 750-page book, this is a thoroughly engaging and inviting read that deftly carries the heavy weight of the historical events it builds up to, describes and then explains. But Mandela also doesn't shy away from the harsh truths of his experience at the hands of South Africa's apartheid government. The horrors and humiliations are all here.

Most importantly, *Long Walk To Freedom* allows you to look deeper into the life of one of the 20th century's most impactful political figures. He covers his youth as the foster son of a Tembu chief, his increasing awareness of white control of his country and his unwavering determination to challenge apartheid. One of the most fascinating sections of his book covers the years he spent incarcerated on Robben Island. You might think that the routine and restrictions of prison life would lead these years to be uneventful, but they were anything but.

In fact, much of this memoir is based on writing Mandela did in secret while on Robben Island, smuggled out so that a copy of the manuscript survived even when his own was discovered and destroyed. Mandela carries himself in the book much as he did in life after his release: with dignity, compassion and no obvious sign of bitterness, which given the details laid out here is all the more remarkable. And in this Folio edition *Long Walk To Freedom* gets the premium presentation it thoroughly deserves. ***JG***

★★★★★



DECIPHERING AZTEC HIEROGLYPHS

A fascinating examination of an ancient language

Author Gordon Whittaker **Publisher** Thames and Hudson
Price £25 **Released** Out Now

The Nahuatl-speaking Aztecs presided over one of the most magnificent early civilisations ever discovered, and one of their many achievements was the development of a sophisticated and visually captivating hieroglyphic writing system. In *Deciphering Aztec Hieroglyphs: A Guide to Nahuatl Writing*, Gordon Whittaker provides us with a step-by-step guide to reading and understanding this breathtaking way of writing.

Richly illustrated with examples that bring the hieroglyphs to life, Whittaker succeeds in making these ancient writings accessible. And alongside the guide to the hieroglyphs themselves, he provides us with a history of the discovery and interpretation of the Nahuai language itself, as well as a comprehensive history of the Aztec world.

This is a fascinating book that demystifies what might seem to modern eyes to be a sometimes impenetrable system of language. The vivid, artistically rich hieroglyphs illuminate the text, while Whittaker's carefully constructed guide to understanding them is always accessible, enthusiastic and compelling. There is nothing dry or dusty about this book at all, nor the ancient language within. It is by turns complex, witty and revealing, and readers will find much to enjoy here. Though this book will obviously appeal to linguists and students of the ancient world and its languages, it has a wider appeal among those seeking an introduction to the Aztecs and their language. ***CC***

★★★★½

Out now!

History of the Olympic Games

Traditionally, every four years, the world comes together to watch the best of the best compete for gold, silver, bronze and glory at th Olympics. It's a spectacle filled with fire, spirit and national pride. Now you can chart the entire history of the Olympics, from its earliest days in Ancient Greece all the way to the postponed Tokyo Games.

Buy *History of the Olympic Games* in shops or online at **magazinesdirect.com**
Price: £12.99

HISTORY of WAR **RECOMMENDS...**

Out now!

Tornado: In the eye of the storm

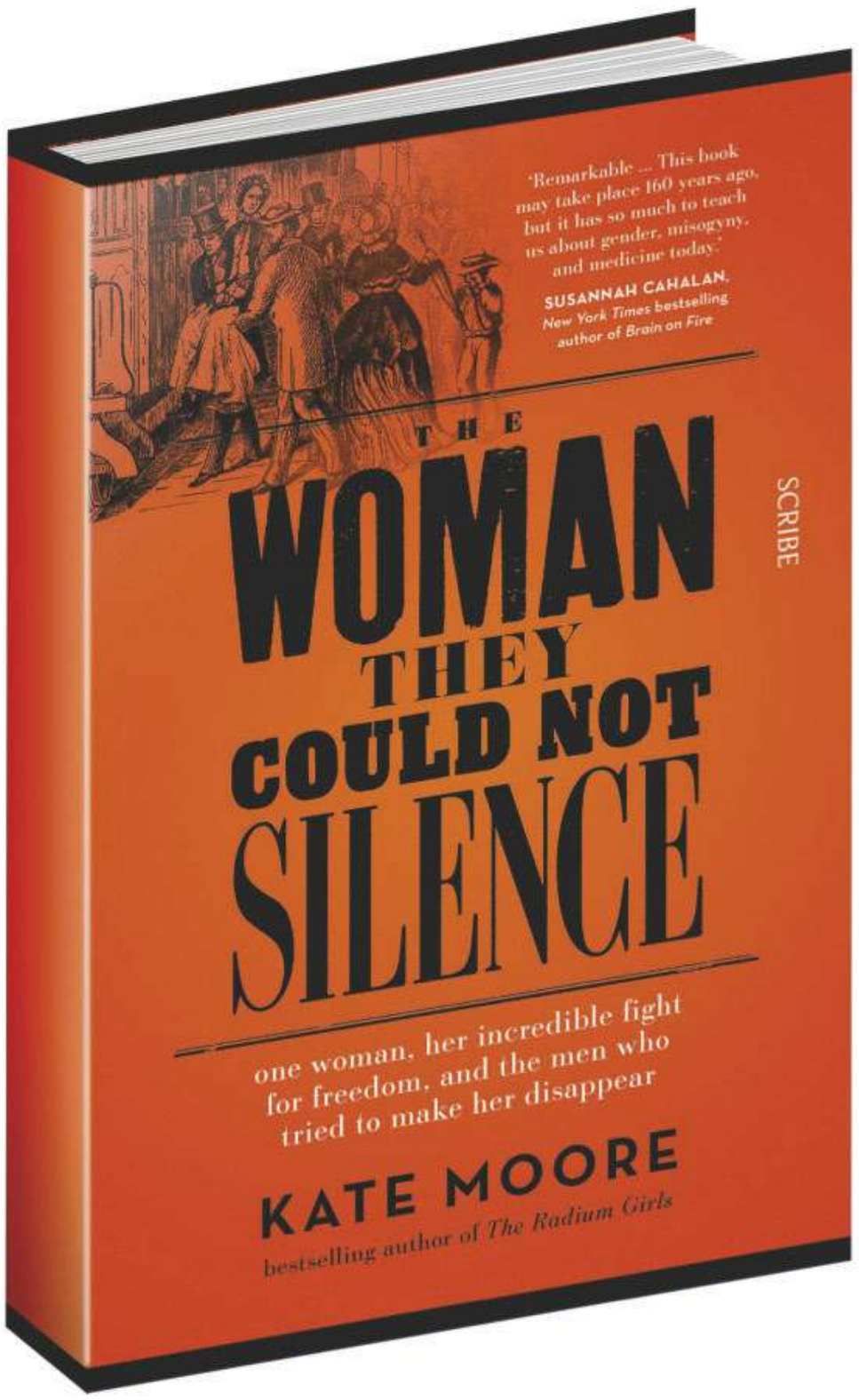
Author John Nichol **Price** £20 **Publisher** Simon and Schuster

Nichol is well known as a member of a Tornado crew shot down during the First Gulf War, but this book is no mere rehash of his previous memoir, *Tornado Down*. He has used his extensive knowledge and contacts to create a well-rounded record of the Tornado strike force during the Gulf War. Nichol combines a professional eye for the technicalities with the human stories to create a readable and informative work, and a fitting tribute to those who did not come home.

THE WOMAN THEY COULD NOT SILENCE

Elizabeth Packard was courageous in the face of adversity

Author Kate Moore **Publisher** Scribe Publications **Price** £10.99 **Released** Out now


'Remarkable ... This book may take place 160 years ago, but it has so much to teach us about gender, misogyny, and medicine today.'
SUSANNAH CAHALAN, New York Times bestselling author of Brain on Fire
THE
WOMAN
THEY
COULD NOT
SILENCE
one woman, her incredible fight for freedom, and the men who tried to make her disappear
KATE MOORE
bestselling author of The Radium Girls
SCRIBE

"Packard was determined to prove her sanity, gain her freedom and be reunited with her children"

In June 1860 Elizabeth Packard – a loyal wife and a mother of six – was forcibly removed from her home and sent to Jacksonville Insane Asylum in Illinois on the orders of her husband. A formidable woman who refused to accept this cruel fate, Packard has largely been forgotten by history. However, her story has finally been brought to life thanks to Kate Moore, the author of the international bestseller *The Radium Girls*.

In her own words, Packard's marriage was "cheerless" but she prioritised the happiness of her husband and children. Although she was denied her independence and agency by her husband, Packard was inspired to express her opinions thanks to the first Woman's Rights Convention, held in Seneca Falls in 1848.

Yet her opinions on religion and women's rights contradicted those of her husband, who felt threatened by her and questioned her sanity. His solution? To have her committed to an asylum without a trial, a completely legal move. But if he thought this would silence his wife then he was wrong, as Packard was determined to prove her sanity, gain her freedom and be reunited with her children.

During her three years in the asylum, Packard protested her incarceration through physical resistance, her writing, and negotiating with hospital staff. She also attempted to improve the lives of her fellow inmates, making clothes for them and washing them, developing a routine that helped her maintain her sanity.

It is impossible to not feel frustrated when you discover that plenty of other sane women had been thrown into the asylum for failing to adhere to society's expectations – one woman was committed because she spent too much time on "serious reading". To make matters worse, these women were frequently subjected to abuse at the hands of the staff, while treatments for 'insane' women ranged from medication to invasive and mutilating procedures.

Moore's extensive research for this book is clear and she includes various examples of Packard's own writing, which provides a valuable insight into the mind of this intelligent and brave woman. In fact, Moore has produced such a compelling and emotional narrative that at times it's easy to forget that you're reading a piece of non-fiction. Having said this, the book is lengthy and the pacing of the story dragged a little at the beginning.

Packard was eventually declared 'incurable' and discharged from the asylum, partly due to pressure from her children, only to be locked in her home by her husband. Her friends obtained a writ of habeas corpus and a trial to determine her sanity took place, with the jury taking just seven minutes to declare Packard sane.

Following her release, she dedicated her life to fighting for women's rights and asylum reform, founding the Anti-Insane Asylum Society and campaigning for legislative changes. Gripping and distressing, Packard's story is a timely must-read, especially when you consider that women around the world are still fighting for equality today, over 160 years later. ***JL***

★★★★☆

HISTORY VS HOLLYWOOD

Fact versus fiction on the silver screen

TRIAL OF THE CHICAGO 7

Director: Aaron Sorkin **Starring:** Yahya Abdul-Mateen II, Sacha Baron Cohen, Frank Langella **Country:** USA **Released:** 2020

Does this timely film about government repression tell the whole truth?

VERDICT: Bends a lot of events to make a modern political point

01 Many of the antics of Jerry Rubin and, particularly, Abbie Hoffman in court are based on real events. They really did dress in judge's robes one day and apparently had police uniforms underneath. They regularly interrupted and cracked jokes throughout the trial.

02 Bobby Seale is bound and gagged in the film, which is accurate, but if anything the movie downplays his treatment. In the film Seale is released after only a few minutes, when in fact he was bound while in court for several days before a mistrial was declared for his case.

03 The film seems to capture Judge Julius Hoffman very accurately. He dismissed evidence, witnesses and jurors that might have helped the defence. He even had the defendants and their lawyers cut their hair for court, which is not in the film.

04 Prosecuting counsel Richard Schultz comes across as sympathetic to the defendants and sceptical of the trial. In reality he was fully behind the prosecution and didn't ask for a mistrial – that was defence attorney William Kunstler's motion.

05 The trial ends with Tom Hayden reading the names of the Americans killed in Vietnam since the trial started. This didn't happen. David Dellinger attempted to read the names much earlier in the trial. Hayden actually just read a statement like the other defendants.

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All images: © Alamy

Did you know?

Apples were first brought to North America by European settlers in the 17th century

MOLASSES APPLE PIE

A CIVIL WAR CLASSIC, UNITED STATES, 19TH CENTURY

Ingredients

For the crust:

- 250g plain flour
- 112g cold butter, cubed
- 1 egg, beaten
- 4-5 tbsp ice water
- Pinch of salt

For the filling:

- 5 green apples
- 340g molasses (also known as black treacle)
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp cinnamon

Although apple pies are considered to be quintessentially American – and a key part of America's cultural identity since the 20th century – the first recorded recipe for the dessert actually dates back to 14th century England. During the American Civil War, apple pies were one of the most popular sweet treats and they were easy to make if the right ingredients could be found. When apples were scarce, those in the South would resort to making mock apple pies using hardtack crackers for the filling. Recipes often used molasses rather than sugar, as it was readily available and easy to store and transport. This particular recipe has been adapted from a recipe by Mrs Mary Cornelius in her 1846 cookbook, *The Young Housekeeper's Friend*.

METHOD

01 Preheat your oven to 200°C/180°C/Gas mark 6. To start, make the dough for the pie crust. Sieve the flour and salt into a mixing bowl. Add the cubes of cold butter and, using your fingers, rub the butter into the flour until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.

02 Next, add the ice water to the mixture – one tablespoon at a time – until the dough forms. Wrap the dough in cling film and refrigerate for up to 30 minutes.

03 While you wait for the dough to chill, core, peel and slice the green apples.

04 Once the dough is ready, remove it from the fridge and divide it into two pieces. Place one piece on a lightly floured surface and roll it out until it is big enough to line a deep pie dish.

05 Line the pie dish with the rolled out dough and then fill the pie with the sliced apples. Sprinkle the nutmeg and cinnamon over the apples and pour the molasses over the top.

06 Roll out the remaining dough and cover the pie with it – you can choose to make a lattice top if you wish. Glaze the apple pie with the beaten egg and then bake in the oven for 20 to 30 minutes, until the pie is golden brown.

07 Allow the pie to cool slightly before serving alongside some vanilla ice cream.

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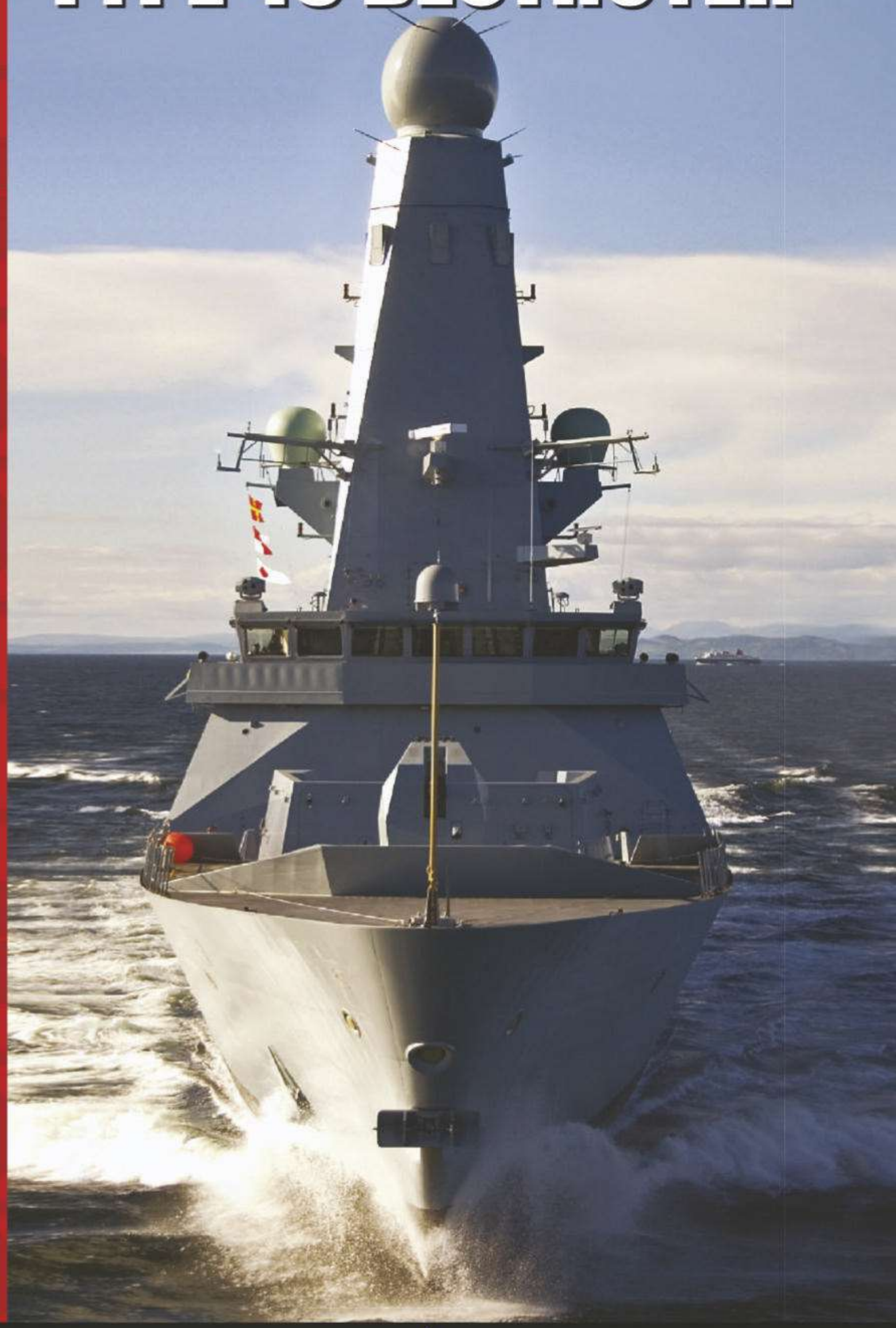

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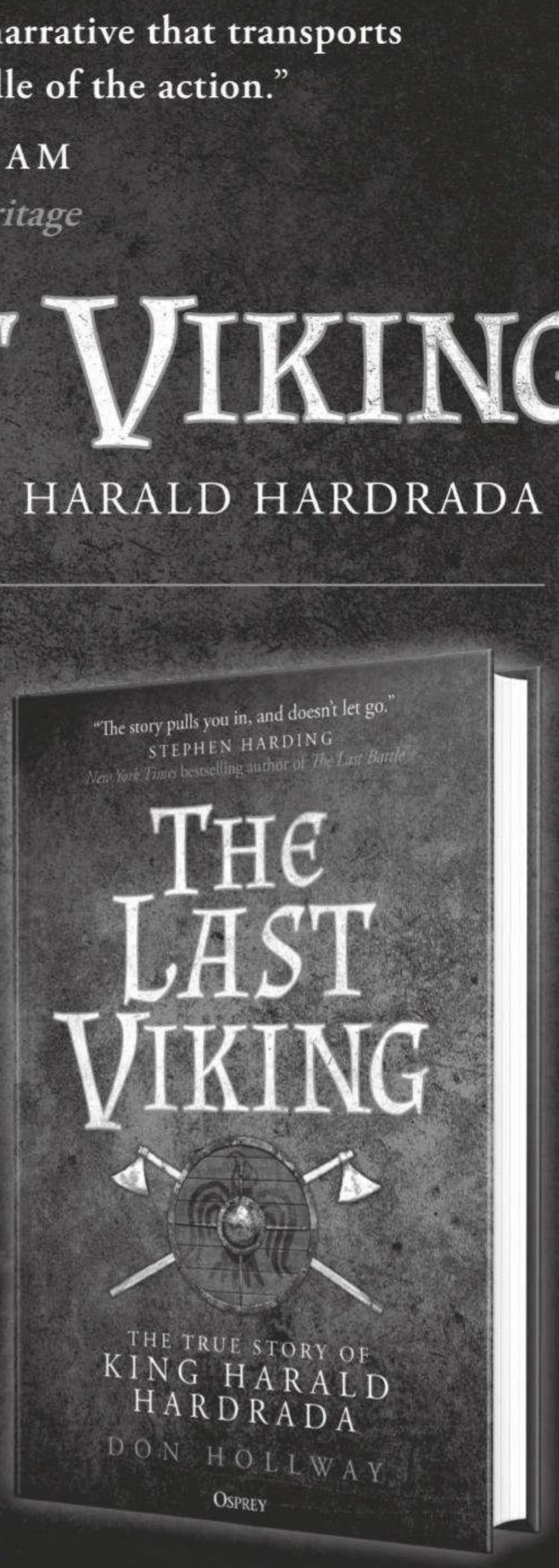
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